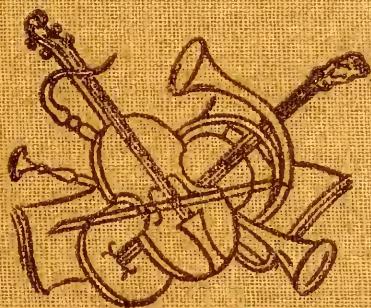
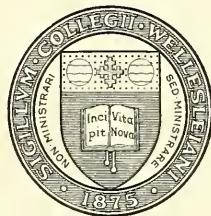


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THE WORLD OF MUSIC

EDITED BY SIR GEORGE FRANCKENSTEIN, G.C.V.O., AND OTTO ERICH DEUTSCH

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THE WALTZ



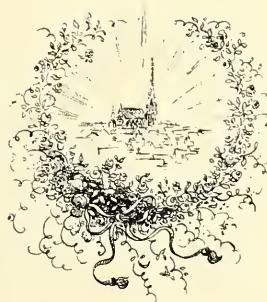
VALSE À TROIS TEMPS

*Coloured lithograph by Jean Sorriens after Anaïs Colin, 1844*

MOSCO CARNER

# THE WALTZ

*WITH 4 PLATES IN COLOUR  
& 31 BLACK-AND-WHITE  
ILLUSTRATIONS*



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VALSE À TROIS TEMPS

*Coloured lithograph by Jean Sorriau after Anaïs Colin, 1844*

FRONTISPICE

A GROUP OF WALTZERS

*Coloured lithograph by J. H. A. Randal, 1817*

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'A SKETCH AT A BALL'

From 'Mr. Chumley's Holidays' by Randolph Caldecott

*Coloured lithograph, 1883*

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DANCE OF VIENNESE LAUNDRY-GIRLS

Painting by Josef Engelhart, 1896

*Städtische Sammlungen, Vienna*

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TO HELEN  
WHOSE ENTHUSIASM FOR JOHANN STRAUSS  
AND THE VIENNESE WALTZ  
SURPASSES EVEN MINE



I

### FIRST STEPS

EVERY nation has at least one national dance that we have come to regard as peculiarly its own, a dance that seems to epitomise the spirit of the people. The mere mention of its name at once brings to one's mind the country in which it was born. Think of the Irish jig, the French minuet, the Italian tarantella, the Spanish *jota*, the Russian *gopak*, the Polish *mazurka*, the Hungarian *czardas*, and the Czech *polka*. To such national dances belong the *ländler* and the *waltz*, the foremost dances of the Germanic peoples, and in particular of the Austrians.

It is no exaggeration to say that thanks chiefly to such composers as Schubert, Lanner and the Straussses, the *waltz* has become the musical symbol of Austria, or, more precisely, of its capital, Vienna. Indeed, had Strauss the younger, the uncrowned king of the *waltz*, been a vainglorious man, he might well have said of himself, in the vein of Louis XIV, "*la valse, c'est moi!*".

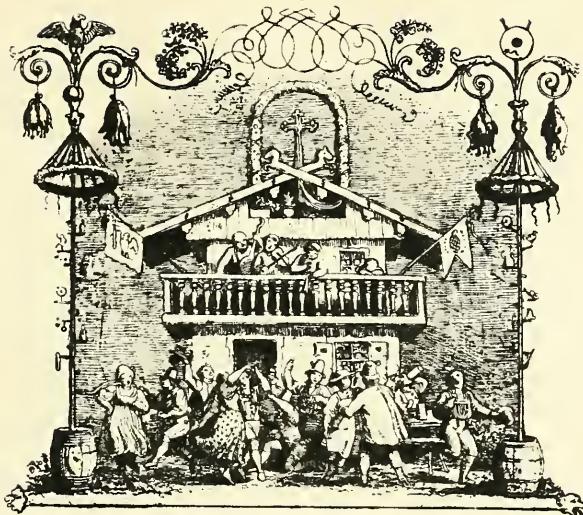
Yet much water had to flow under the Danube bridges before the *waltz* attained the classic form and perfection Strauss imparted to it. Its growth from primitive miniatures of eight and sixteen bars' length to whole sets, with a quasi-symphonic introduction and a long coda, often running into four hundred bars and more, was a rather slow process, the beginning of which reaches well back into the second half of the eighteenth century, or even earlier.

It is not until about 1750 that we first come across a dance called the *walzer*. The word itself is the noun from the verb *walzen*, connected with the Latin *volvere*, and in its widest sense denotes a rotating motion, such as rolling, turning or revolving. It had been in use in the German language for a number of centuries, yet not until the second half of the eighteenth century was it used to describe an apparently new form of dancing in which the turning of single couples constituted one of the most characteristic features. This new round-dance in triple time quickly gained immense popularity in the southern parts of Germany, Bavaria, Austria and Bohemia. Not the least of its attractions was the fact that, like the English country dances, it broke down the rigid class distinctions so typical of eighteenth-century society. Anybody and everybody was free to join in it, irrespective of rank and status. As a traveller from Bavaria reported:

The people here are excessively fond of the pleasure of dancing; they need only hear the music of a waltz to begin to caper, no matter where they are. The public dance floors are visited by *all* classes; these are the places where ancestors and rank seem to be forgotten and aristocratic pride laid aside. Here we see artisans, artists, merchants, councillors, barons, counts and excellencies dancing together with waitresses, women of the middle class, and ladies. Every stranger who stays here for a while is infected by this dance malady.

Yet was the waltz truly a completely new dance? And was it the invention of a single individual who, like the Czech peasant girl credited with inventing the polka, hit upon a dance that gave so much sensuous pleasure that henceforth people found it irresistible? The precise origin of the waltz is rather obscure, but this much is certain: it neither sprang up so suddenly as it appears to have done, nor can it be ascribed to a single inventor. It derived to all intents and purposes from the *ländler*, and through it from the folk-dances of Southern Germany. These dances, known under their generic name of German Dances (*Teutsche, Deutsche*) can be traced to the fourteenth century if not even further back. They were all round-dances, mostly in triple time, and were danced by single couples in close embrace, as distinct from those dances in which two rows of partners faced one another.

These German dances hailed most probably from the more alpine districts of Germany and Austria (the Bavarian Highlands, the Tyrol, Styria, Carinthia and Upper Austria), and were mostly peasant dances in which wild hopping, stamping, and throwing of the female partner formed the outstanding features. The tunes were sung, as is still the custom with the



LIFE IN THE BAVARIAN MOUNTAINS  
Etching by Eugen Neureuther, 1838

Austrian *ländler*, or played on the fiddle and some alpine wind instruments. Most of these tunes were originally intended to accompany some stereotyped manual work such as sowing, reaping or gathering the crops. Like the English sea shanties, they were work songs with a markedly regular rhythm which facilitated and regularised the mechanical action they accompanied. One form of these work songs is still alive in the South German *Schnadahüpft* (literally, “the hopping of the reaper”) which is both sung and danced, and is akin to the *ländler* in melody and rhythm. Other such tunes derived from hunting calls and from the work songs of boatmen and blacksmiths.

It was only a step from these rhythmical work songs to independent dances, the figures of which often imitated in a stylised form certain actions originally associated with a particular kind of work. Here lies, incidentally, the origin of the German guild dances of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries which Wagner revived in his *Mastersingers*. Yet other dances were of a frankly erotic nature, representing a kind of love-play in which the partners closely embraced and kissed each other. Such dances sometimes degenerated into coarse lasciviousness arousing fierce objection on the part of the Church and the civil authorities, who saw in these dances “the invention

of the Devil" and "an incitement to sinful passions". A more poetical interpretation is found in an old German verse :

Whoso the dance did first discover  
Had in his mind each maid and her lover  
With all their burning ardour.

In their progress from country to town, these dances seem to have lost some of their coarser features, and it was usual to combine them with a more stately and slow dance in common time, thus forming a contrasting pair (*Tanz* and *Nachtanz*). The stately dance called the allemande came first, and here the partners danced in two rows facing each other, while the second dance, often referred to as the tripla (on account of its triple time) or up-spring, retained its original form, with single couples turning and hopping in close embrace. In contrast to the great variety of folk-dances of other nations, this pair apparently constituted the chief form of national dancing in Germany up to the end of the seventeenth century. Chapman, in his *Alphonsus, Emperour of Germany*, makes one of the characters say:

We Germans have no change in our dances:  
An almein and an up-spring, that is all.

With the beginning of the eighteenth century the allemande became obsolete as a dance but survived in the stylised dance movements of Couperin, Bach, Handel and other composers of that period. Thus the tripla or up-spring became independent again, having been given different names in the meantime. These names referred either to the characteristic turning, as in the *Dreber*, *Weller*, *Spinner*, *Schleifer*, or to the particular district in which these dances were especially popular. Hence the *Steirer*, from Steiermark (Styria), and the *Länderli*, *Länderer* or *Ländler*, from *Land*, the German for country, or, more specifically, from "Land ob der Enns", which is another name for Upper Austria. These dances must be regarded as the immediate forerunners of the waltz.

French experts have suggested, however, that it derived from the ancient French *volte* or *volta* which, like the waltz and its forerunners, was a turning dance in triple time. According to Arbeau's *Orchésographie* (1589), it was one of the "lascivious and wayward dances" in which "the damsels are made to jump in such a manner that they often show their bare knees if they do not keep one hand on their dresses to prevent it". The similarity to the early German dances is striking, and when in the seventeenth century the

First Steps



THE MINUET  
Engraving from Kellom Tomlinson's 'Art of Dancing', 1735

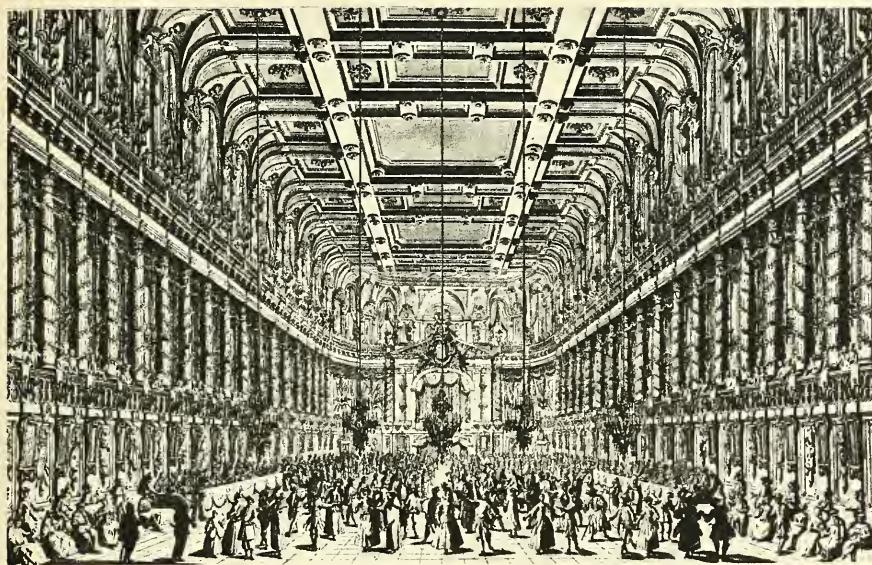
volte spread to Germany it was quickly absorbed into the German dances which had been in existence at least one or two centuries earlier.

Some writers have also attempted to connect the waltz with the minuet. Like the waltz, the minuet was a dance in triple time, but in all other respects it was completely different. It was a figure dance in which the dancers' steps described complicated geometrical patterns. True, the minuet was originally the dance of the French peasants in the district round Poitou (*branle de Poitou*), yet in its fully developed form it became the choreographic expression of the stiff and rigid ceremonial that governed high society in

the eighteenth century. It had nothing in common with the early waltz, which was the simple, robust and often vulgar dance of the people. Minuet and waltz stood for entirely different social strata, a fact which is superbly illustrated in the ball-room scene of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*: the aristocrats among the Don's guests dance a minuet, Don Giovanni and Marcellina a contre-danse, a kind of compromise between the nobility and the common people, while Leporello and Masetto, standing as they do on the bottom rung of the social ladder, amuse themselves with a waltz.

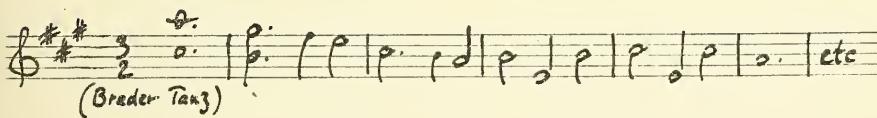
The chief fact most probably responsible for linking the minuet with the waltz is a musical one. Shortly after the introduction of the minuet into the symphony (about the middle of the eighteenth century) the South German composers, especially the Austrians, began to replace the classical minuet by movements which, while still bearing a certain resemblance to it, showed a strong local colour in melody, rhythm and orchestration, notably in the trios. These movements, though still entitled "minuets", were to all intents and purposes a more elaborate or more symphonic form of the German dances, particularly the *ländler*. A glance at many a minuet of Haydn, Mozart and the Mannheim school of composers proves it beyond doubt. Such a musical amalgam of minuet and German dance may have readily suggested some inner link between the two dances, as such, which in reality did not exist. The minuet as a dance was as far removed from the waltz as was the world of Don Giovanni from Masetto's.

How, then, did the South German composer come to introduce elements from the German folk-dance into the symphonic minuet? This question is not irrelevant, as its answer explains the rise and astounding popularity of the early waltz in South Germany. In these parts, notably in Austria, there was never such a gulf between folk- and art-music as existed in other countries. For centuries folk-songs and folk-dances played an important part in the entertainments of the Austrian Court and nobility. The old Hapsburg monarchy was a feudal State in which the Emperor and the aristocracy owned large estates all over the country. There was thus a close contact between the Austrian peasantry and the ruling classes, and it was inevitable that the music and dances of the peasants should have found their way into the Emperor's palace and the rich mansions of Viennese society. During Carnival time, for instance, the Austrian Court used to stage great popular feasts. In the seventeenth century there were the so-called "Wirtschaften", "Landschaften", "Königreiche" and "Bauernhochzeiten"—dramatic representations of scenes from peasant life in which the imperial family and their guests appeared in the costumes of peasants and hunters.



BALL GIVEN BY THE EMPRESS MARIA THERESA, 1744  
*Engraving by the Court architect, Giuseppe Galli-Bibiena*

These entertainments were in the nature of a *bal champêtre* and were interspersed with folk-songs and popular dances such as those shown by the two examples. (The first, taken from *Partie ex Vienna*, a collection of Viennese popular dances of the seventeenth century, is called 'Brader Tanz', the Brader or Prater being one of Vienna's most popular pleasure gardens.)



Another of these old Viennese dance tunes, which has survived into our time and is one of the earliest examples of a waltz, is the famous 'Ach, du lieber Augustin'.



ALLEMANDE DANCED AT A BAL PARÉ  
Engraving after Augustin de St. Aubin, 1773

It is worth mentioning that a great deal of such popular dance music was written not only by what we would nowadays call commercial hacks, but by composers of high repute such as Joh. Joseph Fux (1660-1741), the author of the famous treatise on counterpoint *Gradus ad Parnassum*, and Joh. Heinrich Schmelzer (1630-80), a composer greatly esteemed for his church music. These and other composers introduced a local Austrian and Viennese colour into instrumental music long before Haydn and the early Viennese school of symphonists did so on a larger scale.

Thus we see the important part popular music played in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Austria. Yet up to the later part of the eighteenth century the popularity of all these German dances was not widespread. Outside Austria and South Germany these ländlers and drehers were hardly known. The rest of Germany danced the allemande, a stiff round dance in triple time, which was not of alpine origin and should not be confused with the ancient allemande in common time, mentioned earlier. (It might be as well here to clear up the existing confusion as to which dances were covered by the term "Deutsche" or German dances. It was (a) the original German name for the eighteenth-century allemande referred to above, (b) another name for the ländler, and (c) the collective name for the various types of South German folk-dances.)

What helped to spread the German dances far beyond their native soil was the introduction of the English country dances to the Continent. Imported into France at the end of the seventeenth century, they thence spread to Germany as *contre-dances*, a supposedly French product. The German and the English country dances had a strong democratic element in common: everybody danced with everybody, and the class consciousness attached to the minuet was dropped. This similarity gradually led to the combination of the English country dances and the German dances, and thus towards the end of the eighteenth century we get a series of ballroom dances which were chiefly made up of *contre-dances* and *Deutsche*. (The latter were often given a French name, such as *Tyroloise*, *Strasbourgoise*, *Alsacienne*, *Styrienne*, etc.) Their popularity was so great that even operatic music was turned into *contre-dances* and waltzes. For instance, Mozart, during his visit to Prague in 1787 on the occasion of the first performance of *Don Giovanni*, mentions a rustic ball at which he "saw with whole-hearted pleasure how people jumped around with sincere enjoyment to the music of my *Figaro* which had been turned into all kinds of *Contres* and *Teutsche*".

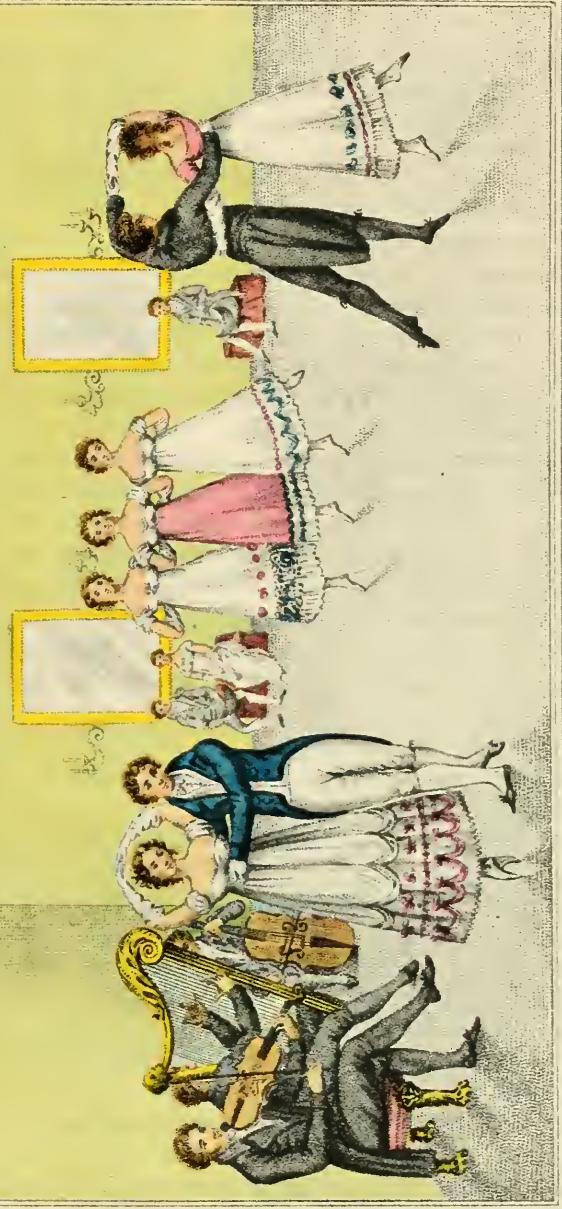
About this time the waltz also began to penetrate into opera, the first known instance being the comic opera *Una Cosa Rara* (1786) by the Spanish composer Martín y Soler (1754-1806). At its first performance in Vienna the waltz in the finale of the second act created a sensation, less on account of its musical quality—it is a simple folk-tune rather in the character of an allemande—than for the novelty of hearing the much-derided dance in an opera.

The success of *Una Cosa Rara* for a time even obscured *Figaro*, but Mozart was quick in taking the hint and introduced a waltz in his new opera, *Don Giovanni*.

And so we come to the dances of the great Viennese composers who did not consider it below their dignity to write whole sets of such music. On the contrary, to provide minuets, contre-dances, *ländler* and *Deutsche*, and for a small fee at that, for the famous masked balls in the Redouten-Säle of the Vienna Hofburg and at the Emperor's summer residence at Schönbrunn, was regarded as a special honour, which Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven shared with such minor lights as Dittersdorf, Eybler, Gyrowetz, Hummel and others. These masked balls were a continuation of those great outdoor festivities of the seventeenth century. Under Joseph II (1765-90) they took place every Sunday during Carnival time and were open to all and sundry. This liberal-minded emperor, who among other things made the Prater a public recreation ground, often appeared at these balls himself, and thus induced the nobility to attend, and in Mozart's words "rub shoulders with hairdressers and chambermaids". A friend of Mozart's, the Irish singer Michael Kelly, has given us a most lively picture of such popular occasions in his *Reminiscences* (1826):

Vienna then [1776] was a place where pleasure was the order of the day and night. . . . The people of Vienna were in my time dancing mad; as the Carnival approached, gaiety began to display itself on all sides, and when it really came, nothing could exceed its brilliancy. The ridotto rooms [Redouten-Säle], where the masquerades took place were in the [Imperial] palace, and spacious and commodious as they were, they were actually crammed with masqueraders. I never saw, or indeed heard of any suite of rooms, where elegance and convenience were more considered; for the propensity of the Vienna ladies for dancing and going to Carnival masquerades was so determined, that nothing was permitted to interfere with their enjoyment of their favourite amusement—nay, so notorious was it that for the sake of ladies in the family way, who could not be persuaded to stay at home, there were apartments prepared, with every convenience for their accouchement, should they be unfortunately required. And I have been gravely told and almost believe it that there have actually been instances of utility of the arrangement. The ladies of Vienna are particularly celebrated for their grace and movements in waltzing of which they never tire. For my own part, I thought waltzing from ten at night until seven in the morning, a continual whirligig; most tiresome to the eye and ear—to say nothing of any worse consequences.

This reference to such *chambres d'accouchement*, however, was either made with tongue in cheek, or else Kelly was taken in by some wit, as the whole notion is too grotesque to be true.



A GROUP OF WALTZERS  
*Coloured lithograph by J. H. A. Randal, 1817*

That there was a certain amount of loose manners and immorality in the dancing of the early waltz is evidenced by the publication of a great number of books and pamphlets warning the people against the evil consequences of the new dance. Chavanne, a famous dancing-master of the time, dismissed it by saying that “la valse n'a point de rapport avec la bonne danse”, and in 1797 a book appeared entitled *Beweis, dass der Walzer eine Hauptquelle der Schwäche des Körpers und des Geistes unserer Generation sey. Deutschlands Söhnen und Töchtern angelegenlichst empfohlen.* (Proof that the waltz is a main source of the weakness of the body and mind of our generation. Most urgently recommended to the sons and daughters of Germany.) Yet the sons and daughters of Germany, and of many other countries for that matter, left these pious warnings unheeded. The waltz had begun its triumphal conquest of the whole Continent and was not to be obstructed by the violent protests and hostile pamphlets of moralists.

It reached France during the Napoleonic Wars and at once became so popular that the Germans were said to have ceded their national dance, as well as much of their territory, to the French with the Peace of Lunéville (1801). The Vienna Congress of 1815 was held against the background of the then ubiquitous waltz, and the Prince de Ligne coined the *bon mot* “Le Congrès ne marche pas—il danse”. Shortly before, the waltz had crossed the Channel, and England, despite the many warnings against “this fiend of German birth, destitute of grace, delicacy and propriety”, received it with open arms. The famous Burney “could not help reflecting how uneasy an English mother would be to see her daughter so familiarly treated, and still more to witness the obliging manner in which the freedom is returned by the female”.

Yet the most caustic and sarcastic remarks on the waltz were left to be made by Lord Byron, in his poem “The Waltz: an Apostrophic Hymn” (1813), which he published under the pseudonym of Horace Hornem, Esq. At the invitation of the Countess of Waltzaway, Mr. Hornem, a country gentleman from a midland county, visits London with Mrs. Hornem, and attends a ball at the Countess’s. There he sees “poor dear Mrs. Hornem with her arms half round the loins of a huge hussar-looking gentleman I never set eyes on before; and his, to say the truth, rather more than half-round her waist, turning round and round to a d——d see-saw-up-and-down sort of tune”. Mr. Hornem’s patriotic feelings are hurt by this German article of importation to whom “bow Irish Jig and ancient Rigadoon”, Scotch reels and country-dance. His morality is shocked by its “lewd grasp and lawless contact warm”, and his aristocratic feelings appalled that

The fashion hails—from Countesses to Queens,  
 And maids and valets waltz behind the scenes;  
 Wide and more wide thy witching circle spreads,  
 And turns—if nothing else—at least our heads;  
 With thee even clumsy cits attempt to bounce,  
 And cockneys practise what they can't pronounce."

As Byron was afflicted with a club-foot, was not this tirade perhaps a case of sour grapes?

It is amusing to see how English dancing masters of the time, anxious to benefit their trade from this new craze, attempted to whitewash the waltz against the charges of immorality. A certain Thomas Wilson, writing *A Description of the Correct Method of Waltzing* (1816) and dedicating it to the "Ladies and Gentlemen of a number of London Theatres", is at great pains to assure his public that the waltz "is generally admitted to be a promoter of vigorous health and productive of an hilarity of spirits". As danced in England, he says, it is "totally destitute of the complained-of attitudes and movements used in warmer and lighter climates", and hence it is "not an enemy of true morals and endangering virtue". This piece of professional hypocrisy reaches its height in the blunt assertion that the waltz is "chaste in comparison with Country dancing, Cotillions and other species of dancing".



A BURLESQUE OF POPULAR DANCING IN ENGLAND

*Detail from an etching after Henry Bumby, 1811*



## II

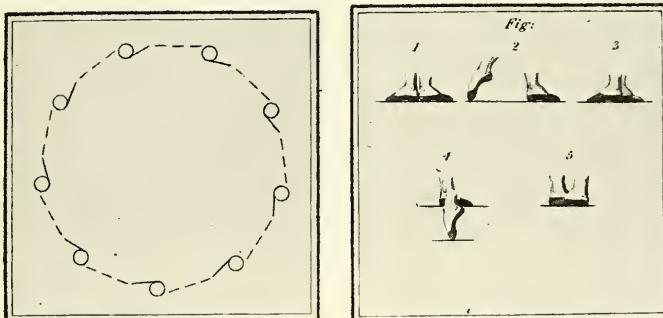
### TURN AND TURN ABOUT

So much for the social history of the early waltz. We may now pause for a moment and consider in more detail its choreographic and musical features.

In its early form the waltz was often hardly distinguishable from its rustic ancestor, the *ländler*. The latter was rather slow ( $\text{J.} = c. 48$ ) and was frequently danced in separate figures, as may still be seen in the alpine parts of Austria and Bavaria. Stamping and hopping with occasional gliding steps were its main motions. The partners held each other in close embrace, by their hands or waists; from time to time they passed under one another's arms and sometimes executed other difficult figures such as the throwing of the female over the male's shoulder as in the ancient *volte*. Such figures naturally demanded a slow pace. Moreover, it was the custom to dance the *ländler* outdoors, often on rough ground, usually in front of an inn or on the village common, and the dancers wore heavy footwear, such as hob-nailed shoes and boots, all of which accounts for the slow, robust and heavy nature of the dance. The chief difference between the *ländler* and the early waltz seems to have been the preponderance in the latter of gliding steps over hopping and leaping.

With the transplantation of this rustic type of waltz to the towns its character began to change. The smooth, polished floors of urban dance-halls and ball-rooms, and the lighter footwear and dresses of the towns-people, resulted in a quickening of the pace ( $\text{d.} = c. 70$ ). Hopping and

skipping proved a hindrance to rapid rotation, hence their replacement by gliding steps. The movement of the dances became more supple and flexible; the staccato of the *ländler* changed into the glissando of the waltz. Thus gradually we arrive at the style in which the waltz was danced in the nineteenth century, i.e. the left foot starts in a half stride, the right foot glides backward in a curve and the left foot completes the half circle, while at the same time the dancers move in a wide circle round the room:



SKETCHES SHOWING MOVEMENTS AND POSITIONS IN WALTZING  
*From Thomas Wilson's 'Description of the Correct Method of Waltzing', 1816*

The quickening of the pace and the disappearance of the heavy stamping on each beat of the bar inevitably led to the typical waltz accentuation ONE-two-three. Hence the characteristic waltz accompaniment: the bass of the harmony is sounded first on the first beat of the bar and is followed by the rest of the chord on the subsequent two beats (see example below). This accompaniment is often referred to as "guitar bass", as the guitar allowed an easy execution of such figures. It is, incidentally, a Viennese custom to anticipate the second beat slightly:

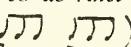


which imparts to the accompaniment an additional swing and a feeling of urgency.

While the turning motion remained the common characteristic, in the early nineteenth century we get two main types of the waltz: the German, or Viennese, and the French. The French variety was more complicated, consisting of a set of three different dances which were performed in close succession:

1. *Slow waltz or valse* in  $3/8$  or  $3/4$ , andante. After the tune had been played several times the tempo was increased to allegretto. This led to

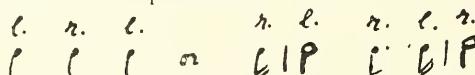
2. *Sauteuse waltz* in  $6/8$ , allegretto, often increased to allegro. The steps included leaping and springing, hence the name, from *sauter*, to spring. And finally came

3. *Jeté or Quick Sautense waltz* in  $6/8$ , allegro with gradual acceleration to presto. Here again there was much leaping and springing. The last two dances were often referred to as *valse à deux temps*, on account of the two main accents in a bar. (  )

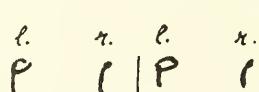
The French *valse* included pirouettes and all the other figures of the five basic positions of classical ball-room dancing. Yet for all the jumping in the Sauteuse and Jeté, the French type was on the whole a more refined dance than the Viennese and was executed on the point of the toe.

In contrast, the Viennese waltz was danced on the flat foot, and had only one chief motion, a constant rotating glide which the dancers tried to enliven by throwing head and body from one side to another. The early *ländler*-like type moved in slow  ,

while the true Viennese or Quick waltz was danced either with three steps to a bar, with or without an up-beat:



or with two steps to a bar:



This two-step waltz became for a time the craze of early-nineteenth-century Vienna, where it was called *Langaus*. In a frenzied gallop the dancers would tear in a straight line along the whole length of the ball-room, not once but many times, until they became completely exhausted. One of the places most famous for this wild waltz was the "Mondseeinhaus auf der Wieden",



'THE DANCING MANIA': A DANCING LESSON IN PARIS  
Engraving by Jean-François Bosio from 'Le Bon Genre', c. 1800

of which Adolph Bäuerle, a well-known Viennese writer of the time, wrote a graphic description:

The Mondschein-Saal made an immortal name for itself by the mortality among the young people who visited it, and there danced nothing but the *Langaus*. At that time it was the fashion to be a dashing dancer, and the man had to waltz his partner from one end of the hall to the other with the greatest possible speed. If one round of the immense hall had been considered sufficient, one might perhaps have allowed this bacchantic dance to pass. But the circle had to be made six to eight times at a breathless speed and without pause. Each couple tried to outdo the other and it was no rare thing for an apoplexy of the lungs to put an end to the madness. Such frightful intermezzi finally made the police forbid the *Langaus*.

Now what was the music of these early dances like? At first their form and harmony was primitive. They mostly consisted of two sections of eight bars each, with the tonic and dominant chords as the main harmonies (see the example on page 17). The second section was more often than not a mere repetition of the first, either in the tonic key or the dominant, the key a fifth higher. This was such a stereotyped practice that it gave rise to ironical comments. The Austrian poet Nikolaus Lenau wrote a poem

“Styrian Dance” in which he asks whether our earthly life will be repeated in heaven “just higher by a fifth” in the same way as

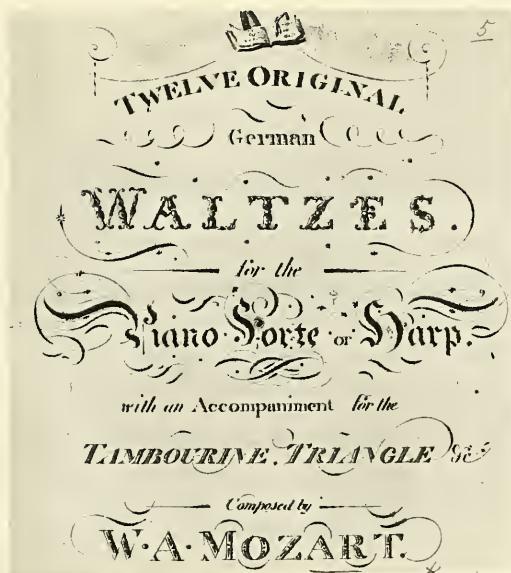
. . . our musicians  
repeat their Waltz Part One  
in slightly different key  
on fiddles and on zither  
and call this Waltz Part Two.

Composers such as Haydn, Dittersdorf, Mozart and Schubert, however, wrote much more elaborate dances. With them the second part is either a melodic and rhythmic variation of the first, or altogether a new tune. The *harmónies*, too, are richer and of greater variety, particularly those of the Schubert dances. Yet such artistic examples were the exception rather than the rule. The musical hacks of the time were content to turn out dances of the most primitive kind. Generally speaking, the writing of waltzes in the late eighteenth century was considered almost child’s play, as may be seen from the title of a book fraudulently published under Mozart’s name and purporting to be *A method of composing with two dice as many Waltzes and Schleifer as one wishes, without being musical or knowing anything of composition [sic.]*

As these early waltzes were short and were repeated over and over again, the more sophisticated townspeople soon tired of them and composers began to string them together in sets usually consisting of six to twelve dances. Moreover, a trio or alternativo was added to each main dance, on the model of minuet and trio, after which the main dance was repeated: //:A://:B (trio)://A/, the whole set being rounded off by a coda, the turn-out for the dancers. This coda referred to the last dance and then went on to introduce new melodic material. Thus the form of the early dances was gradually extended.

Yet these sets had no inner unity. Beyond the fact that dances of a similar character followed one another, there was no melodic connection between them, and the sequence of keys was rather loose. Nevertheless, the formal limitations imposed by the practical purpose of the music were made good by the rich variety of melodies which for obvious reasons had to be simple, tuneful and rhythmical. Many of them clearly show their derivation from alpine music; yodelling, turns, overblowing, “natural” intervals (octaves, fifths and fourths), imitation of alpine melodies (*Kubreigen* or *Ranz des Vaches*) and figures peculiar to primitive wind instruments such as the alphorn, the shepherd’s pipe and the chalumeau are all to be found there. This

Turn and Turn About.



WALTZES ARRANGED FROM TUNES BY MOZART

Engraved title-page, c. 1799

alpine flavour, incidentally, permeates Austrian dance music from Schmelzer in the seventeenth century, if not earlier, to Johann Strauss and even to the present time. It is its special hall-mark.

To return to the eighteenth century. The most artistic examples of popular orchestral dances of that period are those by Mozart. Mozart often stressed the popular element by introducing actual folk-tunes or modelling his own melodies on them, and by imitating, usually in the trio, the mock sentimentality of Viennese street songs and ditties. There are, in addition, hints at Spanish, Hungarian and Croatian dance music. Mozart also uses well-known operatic tunes of the time, both from his own and other composers' operas, a practice that later Lanner and the two Straussses continued with great success.

These Mozart sets contain a variety of dances: minuets, contre-dances, schleifer, dreher, ländler and slow rustic waltzes. Their great attraction lies not only in their melodic grace and charm, but in their harmonic refinement, and, above all, in the ingenuity and variety of their orchestral garb. Mozart's humour comes out in the many descriptive touches of a comic

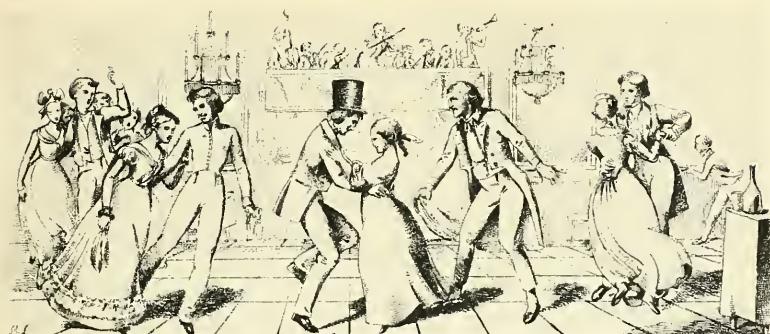
nature such as the use of the piccolo in the trio K. 600, no. 5, "The Canary", and the bells and posthorn in the trio K. 605, no. 3, "The Sleigh". The basis of Mozart's dance orchestra is the strings, without violas, to which are added wind instruments and some unusual percussion in ever-changing combination (see, for instance, the German Dances K. 571 with the Turkish Music of the coda).

Haydn wrote several sets of orchestral dances, and his "Mouvement de Waltze" in a sonatina of about 1766 seems to have been the first known instance of a piano waltz. There are also a number of dances by Dittersdorf and Beethoven; such as the latter's "Ländlerische Tänze" (1803) and the delightful set of "Wiener" or "Mödlinger Tänze" (1819), written for a village band of seven players, and consisting of minuets, ländlers and waltzes in varying orchestration.

The point to be remembered about these early dances, whether for orchestra or piano, is that they were written as pure dance music and not as concert pieces. It is only the artistic superiority of such examples as Mozart's, Beethoven's and Schubert's that makes it possible to enjoy them nowadays in the concert hall, completely detached from their original purpose.

As for the true concert waltzes, it was apparently Hummel (1778-1837), Mozart's best-known pupil and a great piano virtuoso of his time, who first hit upon the idea of writing sets of pure concert dances for the piano. The first set was his 'Tänze für die Apollo-Säle', composed for the opening, in 1808, of one of Vienna's largest and most fashionable dance halls. Yet the style of these and other Hummel dances is still that of the old Teutsche and the ländler-waltz; slow, heavy and with each beat of the bar accentuated, particularly in the bass. Most of these sets have an extended coda with brilliant piano effects, some of them indulging in descriptive music of a rather naïve character, such as the 'Six Waltzes with Trios and a Battle Coda', op. 91. Others have four to five trios to the main dance, including some vocal quartets. Hummel's waltzes are of little artistic value, yet they possess historic importance as they started the line that was to lead to the concert waltzes of Weber, Chopin, Brahms, Liszt and other romantic composers.

The most beautiful examples of such early piano dances are those by Schubert. Unlike Hummel, he wrote them in the first place to be danced to, thus continuing the practice of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. Schubert probably improvised the majority of these dances, subsequently putting on paper those he liked best and stringing them together in sets. Since some



'LET'S STICK TOGETHER': A COLLECTION OF LÄNDLER  
Title-page by Moritz von Schwind, c. 1825

of the sets contain over thirty numbers and are much too long for actual dancing, it is reasonable to assume that in this later form the composer intended them to be played as pure piano music. Schubert's choice of the piano instead of an orchestra was determined in the first place by the intimate character of his audience, and also by the technical improvements which were gradually introduced into the making of the keyboard instrument. There are, however, some early Schubert dances written for string orchestra.

These Schubert dances best illustrate the style of the early-nineteenth-century Viennese waltz. Many still breathe a rustic air, the air of the Wiener Wald, the country round Vienna. Their pace is on the whole slow and steady; each beat of the bar is stressed, the melody moves mainly in even crotchets and quavers, and there are none of the syncopations and cross-rhythms of the later Viennese waltz. Hybrids between ländler and true waltz, they reflect the *Gemütllichkeit*, the homely atmosphere of the *Biedermeier*. And Schubert, a true son of the Viennese soil, infuses many with a local colour, purer and much less sophisticated than we find in the dances of Mozart and Beethoven.

Some of these waltzes are still in the primitive form of two eight-bar sections (*Erste Walzer*, op. 9, *Deutsche und Ecossaisen*, op. 33), others again run into sixteen and twenty-four bars, or are in ternary form (*Damenländler*, op. 67), and yet others have a proper trio (*Letzte Waltzer*, op. 127), thus foreshadowing the extended waltzes of Lanner and the elder Strauss. It is true that all these dances were mere snippets from Schubert's workshop, yet what wealth of melodic and harmonic invention, what prodigal outpouring of beautiful tunes lie in them! Each waltz has its own tune and the

more extended ones two and sometimes three tunes, with the result that a set may contain nearly half a hundred fresh tunes.

Their charm and beauty is often thrown into greater relief by Schubert's unexpected modulations and his choice of the most delicate harmonies, some of which are truly prophetic of Schumann, Chopin and Wagner, notably those of his 12 *Ländler*, op. 171. And it is surprising what variety of mood the composer manages to express within the short-winded form and under the tyranny of the three-four rhythm. The gay, robust and rumbustious peasant element here mixes with the sentimentality of the *Biedermeier*, and the sad, feminine sweetness of Schubert's own nostalgia. Lanner and Strauss never wrote a waltz in a minor key; it would have seemed a paradox to them. Yet some of Schubert's most inspired dances are in the minor, and of a poetic beauty and poignancy rarely rivalled by any of the later romantic concert waltzes. Schubert knew that nothing is sadder than a sad waltz.

Yet the chief credit for establishing the piano waltz as a concert piece goes to Weber. With his famous 'Invitation to the Dance' (1819) he raised the waltz from the lower sphere of dance-hall and ball-room to the brilliance and glamour of the concert platform. Though a North German by birth, Weber was very fond of the popular and folk-music of South Germany. The immense success of his opera *Der Freischütz* was largely due to the abundance of such music, including among other things a rustic waltz, the melody of which had been current in Bohemia for a long time. When a student at Darmstadt he used to go melody-hunting among the peasants of the surrounding districts, and the principal waltz of his 'Invitation' is supposed to have derived from a popular ditty of the time. Weber had previously written a number of German dances and waltzes both for orchestra and piano, but it is with his 'Invitation' that he created the prototype of the romantic concert waltz. Its novelty was twofold. For one thing, it was frankly programmatic, illustrating a dance-scene between two lovers. The composer himself supplied a detailed "programme". It was the first time in its history that the waltz was put to such outspoken programmatic use.

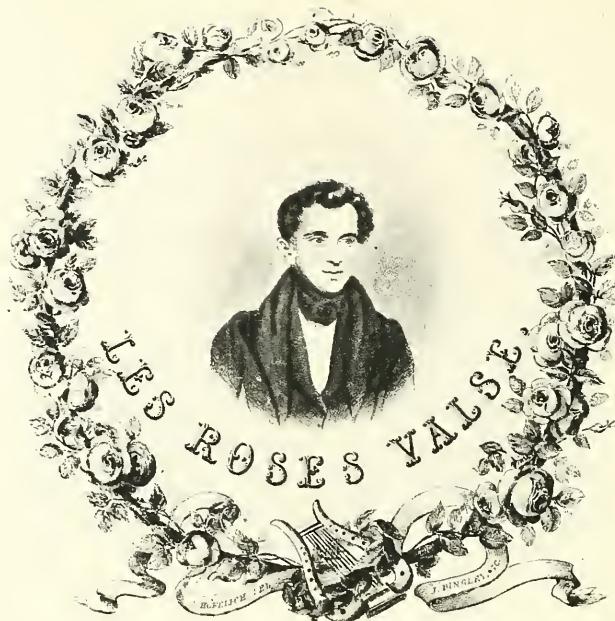
The second new feature lies in its form. Previously the waltz had, at most, only two or four introductory bars, setting the rhythm for the dancers (see Schubert and Hummel). Weber for the first time prefaced it with a proper introduction of truly poetical character, thus creating the model for the long introductions of the later dance and concert waltzes. In addition, the coda of the 'Invitation' refers back to this introduction, by which Weber achieves formal unity. This unity is made still closer by the manner in which



CARL MARIA VON WEBER  
*Detail from a painting by Caroline Bardua*

the waltzes themselves are linked together. Instead of the loose and rather casual string of waltzes of Hummel and Schubert, Weber uses the rondo form and, altogether, shows a clear plan upon which to create a well-balanced contrast of mood, melody and keys. The individual waltzes grow in length—the first, for instance, runs into sixty bars—and hence arose the necessity of reducing their number to five only with a coda.

While Schubert's waltzes often suffer from a quasi-orchestral texture, Weber's 'Invitation' is intrinsic piano music of the bravura type, brilliant, elegant, and fast (the speed was another reason for lengthening the waltzes). Its main key, D flat, is a very pianistic key, lying well under the player's hand, as do the passage work and arpeggios. The melodies are full of rhythmic verve, and the rocking, cajoling tune of waltz no. 2, with the intriguing suspense of the rests, is almost in the vein of Lanner and Strauss. There is, altogether, a feeling of elegant lightness and noble chivalry about the music, unknown in the pre-Weberian waltzes. Small wonder that its appearance created a sensation. Its tunes were used by dance composers in their own waltzes and it became a standard work in every pianist's repertoire. Berlioz and, later, Weingartner scored it for full orchestra.



JOHANN STRAUSS THE ELDER  
Engraved title-page by J. Höflich, c. 1835

### III

#### 'YOU MUST DANCE, I COMMAND YOU!'

W<sup>W</sup>Y<sub>S</sub> O far the history of the waltz has been traced up to the first two decades of the nineteenth century. We have witnessed its gradual establishment not only as an independent dance form but also as a piece of pure concert music. The stage was thus set for the waltz to take over the role of the eighteenth-century minuet and become the foremost dance of a whole age. The chief credit for this goes to the Viennese waltz, which through Lanner, Strauss senior and others reached its classical form in the masterpieces of Strauss the younger.

The Viennese waltz comes of a low parentage. Its cradle stood in the inns, beer-gardens and "Heurigen" (taverns in which wine of current vintage is served) of early-nineteenth-century Vienna and its rural outskirts known as the Vienna Woods—Nussdorf, Döbling, Grinzing, Dornbach, Kahlenberg

and Hüteldorf. These establishments, especially on Sundays and public holidays, were thronged with the lower classes of the Viennese population. Special popularity was enjoyed by the taverns situated along and near the Danube. There were rows of these places bearing such names as “The White Lamb”, “The Golden Bear”, “The White Cockerel”, “The Blue Star”, “The Good Shepherd”, and so on. (The last-named was the birth-place of the first Johann Strauss.)

There was a busy traffic on the Danube, with ships and barges coming downstream from Passau and Linz, and usually carrying, with their cargo of goods, cattle and peasants, a small band of musicians who entertained crew and passengers with simple ländler, dreher, waltzes, folk-songs and popular ditties. (This kind of music was often referred to as *Linzer Schiffs-musik*.) These travelling bands also used to play in the Viennese river inns, and mostly consisted of three or four players: two violins, or a violin and a clarinet, a guitar, and as often as not a double-bass. Their standard of playing was low, since most of these musicians either had very little training or were completely self-taught. Yet what they lacked in technique they seemed, according to contemporary accounts, to make good by the gusto and rhythmic verve of their playing. They not only provided the music for the dancers—each inn had its proper dance floor—but played also the *Tafelmusik* (literally “table-music”) during meals. Hence their popular nickname *Bierfiedler* (beer fiddler) or *Brat'lgeiger* (roast-meat fiddler)—terms still used in the Viennese dialect of to-day.



VALSE À DEUX TEMPS

*Vignette by Bertall from ‘Le Diable à Paris’, 1846*

These obscure itinerant musicians were the first to spread the early Viennese waltz. But equally important in this respect were the more prominent, permanent *Tanzkapellen* or dance bands, like Pamer's, Labitzky's and Fahrbach's, which played in larger if not more reputable establishments in the city, such as coffee-houses and open-air restaurants.

The abundance of dance places was due to the innate dance craze of the Viennese. Vienna's population in the eighteen-thirties numbered less than half a million souls, yet during the Carnival of 1832 no less than 772 balls were given, attended by 200,000 guests, a number corresponding to nearly half the total Viennese population.

This was the world in which Lanner and Strauss reigned as undisputed kings of light music. Like Schubert, they were true children of the Viennese soil. Josef Lanner (1801-43) was the son of a glove-maker; and the father of the first Johann Strauss (1804-49) was the inn-keeper of the "Good Shepherd" in the Leopoldstadt, near the Danube. Both started their career in the same way, Lanner as violinist and Strauss as viola player in the dance band of Michael Pamer (1782-1827). It was an established practice as well as a point of honour for the band-leader to compose his own music, and thus Pamer himself, a gifted composer of *ländler* and waltzes ("Linzerische Tänze"), became the immediate forerunner of Lanner and the elder Strauss.

Neither of the two had any theoretical training worth speaking of, but both had great natural talents which they developed in the hard practical school of Pamer's orchestra. At the age of seventeen Lanner left Pamer and with the two brothers Drahaneck formed his own "orchestra" of two violins and a guitar. The trio was soon joined by the viola of Strauss and presently, by the addition of a cello, grew to a quintet. This quintet kept going until 1824, when it was again enlarged to a string orchestra. Lanner's band used to play in the Prater, among other places, and is supposed to have been Vienna's first open-air orchestra. Its popularity grew to such an extent that Lanner, unable to meet the demand, was forced to divide it, putting Strauss in charge of the second half. In the meantime, its size had grown to that of a full classical orchestra, with wind and percussion instruments.

Dissensions of a private nature, combined with professional jealousy—for Lanner was said often to have introduced new waltzes by Strauss under his own name—led to a separation of the two friends in 1825, and Strauss formed his own orchestra. The irascible yet good-natured Lanner commemorated this event in a programmatic waltz appropriately called "Trennungs-Walzer" (Separation Waltz), op. 19, in which he alludes to the



JOSEF LANNER  
*Painting by Friedrich Krepp*

separation from Strauss by post-horn calls, not forgetting to illustrate the effects of generous drinks by musical hiccups.



Vienna now had two famous dance orchestras, each with its own followers and partisans among the public. Hanslick, an eminent Viennese critic, describing the idolatry of the Viennese for Lanner and Strauss, says "one



SPERL'S DANCE HALL AND GARDENS  
Wood engraving from W. Kisch's 'Vienna's Suburbs', 1888

cannot imagine the wild enthusiasm which the two created in Vienna. . . . Over each new waltz the journals used to go into raptures; innumerable articles appeared about Lanner and Strauss, enthusiastic, humorous and serious, and longer, to be sure, than those devoted to Beethoven and Mozart. It goes without saying that the sweetly intoxicating three-four rhythm which took hold of heads and feet eclipsed great and serious music, and made the audience increasingly unfit for any intellectual effort." Yet Hanslick was fair enough to admit that Lanner and Strauss filled the waltz form with unexpected musical charm and truly poetic life—reflecting "the happy, light-hearted spirit of the Viennese".

Lanner and Strauss came to be reckoned among the chief attractions for foreign visitors, particularly visiting musicians. While the twenty-one-year-old Chopin, anxious to gain recognition in the Austrian capital, states with some regret that "Lanner, Strauss and their waltzes obscure everything", the young Wagner is spellbound by Strauss, "the magical fiddler, the demon of Vienna's innate musical spirit".

The places where Strauss conducted regularly were the Volksgarten in the city, and the Gasthof zum Sperl in the Leopoldstadt. The latter was

reputed not only for its good food and beer, but also for being the rendezvous of Vienna’s *demi-monde*. Here is how Heinrich Laube, a noted North German writer, describes a Strauss evening at the Sperl:

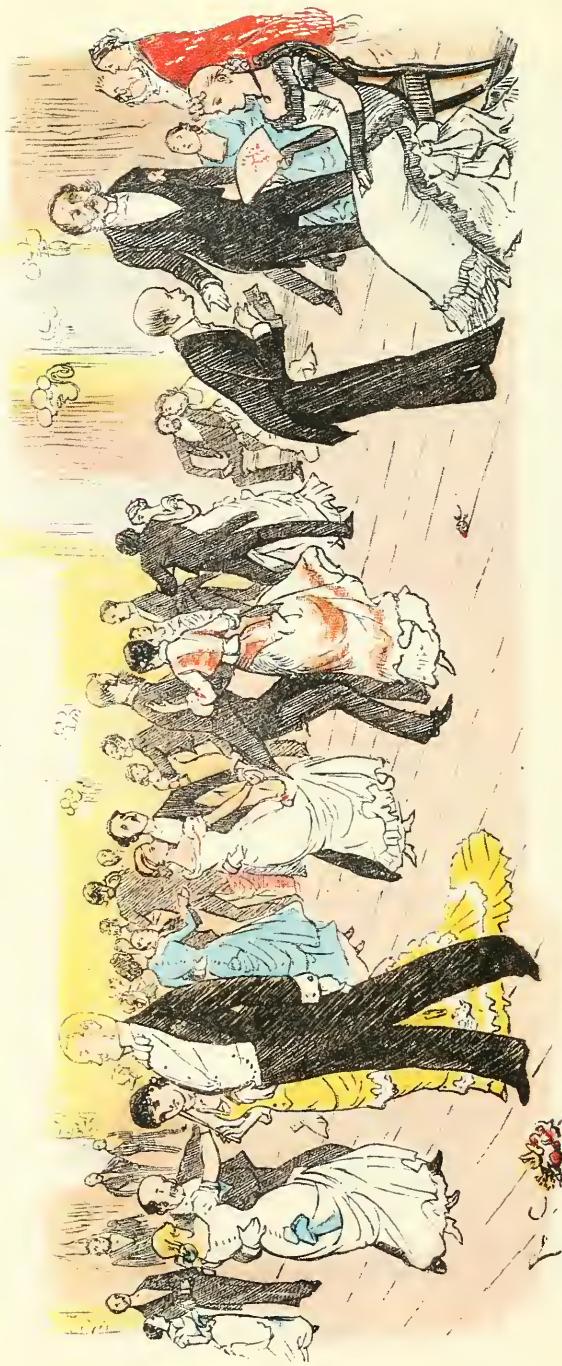
Half a night spent at the “Sperl” when the gardens are in bloom, gives the key to Vienna as a pleasure city. . . . Under illuminated trees and in open arcades people are seated at innumerable tables eating and drinking, chattering, laughing and listening. In their midst is the orchestra, from which come the new waltzes, the bugbear of our learned musicians, the new waltzes that stir the blood like the bite of a tarantula. In the middle of the garden on the orchestra platform there stands the modern hero of Austria, *le Napoleon autrichien*, the musical director Johann Strauss. . . . The father shows him to the child, the Viennese lady shows him to her foreign lover, the host points him out to his guest. . . . The man is black as a Moor; his hair is curly; his mouth energetic, his lips curl, his nose is snub; if his face were not so white he would be the complete king of the Moors. . . .

Typically African, too, is the way he conducts his dances; his own limbs no longer belong to him when the desert storm of his waltz is let loose; his fiddle-bow dances with his arms; the tempo animates his feet; . . . and the Viennese accept this passionate procedure with unexampled enthusiasm, paying such close attention to their hero and his deeds as it would be well for the German public to pay to some other things. He performed a pot-pourri into which some of his waltz themes had been interwoven, and that enormous mixed public recognised the tiniest Strauss allusions, and greeted each waltz rhythm with thunderous cheers.

And now begin the preparations for the real dancing. To keep the unruly crowds back, a long rope is put up and all who remain in the centre of the hall are separated from the actual dancers. The boundary, however, is fluctuating and flexible; it is only possible to distinguish the dancers by watching the girls’ heads in steady rotation. The couples waltz straight through any accidental hindrance in their joyful frenzy . . . Very characteristic is the beginning of each dance. Strauss intones his trembling preludes; panting for full expression they sound tragic. . . . The male partner tucks his girl deep in his arm and in the strangest way they sway themselves into the measure . . . the actual dance begins with whirling rapidity, and the couple hurls itself into the maelstrom.

Lanner was the very opposite of the temperamental Strauss. Modest, rather shy, naively pious (like Haydn and Bruckner), he used to inscribe his compositions “With God”. In fact he was a typical *Biedermeier* and resembled Schubert, whom he knew personally, in many ways. He hardly ever left his native country and was content with his local fame. He lacked the glamour and exotic charm of his rival, nor did he have Strauss’s ambition to gain an international reputation.

In 1837 Strauss went with his orchestra on his first great tour, visiting Germany, Belgium, Holland, France and England, creating a sensation



'A SKETCH AT A BALL'

From 'Mr. Chumley's Holidays' by Randolph Caldecott  
*Coloured lithograph, 1883*

wherever he conducted. In Paris he met a number of famous French composers including his rivals in the field of light French music, such as Musard and Dufresne. The measure of his Paris success may be gauged from a long and enthusiastic article in the *Journal des Débats*, written by no less a person than Berlioz, who particularly admired “the fire, the intelligence and poignant rhythmic coquetry” of Strauss and his orchestra.

In England, which he visited a second time in 1849, Strauss appeared in a number of principal towns. As a musical souvenir of these English visits, he wrote, with some polkas and quadrilles, the ‘Victoria Waltz’, op. 103, composed for the coronation of the Queen, in which he appropriately uses, in the solemn introduction, Arne’s “Rule Britannia”, and in the coda the National Anthem “hotted up” to a waltz. Strauss’s “English” waltzes also include the ‘London-Season Waltz’, op. 112, and in commemoration of the Queen’s wedding the charming ‘Myrtle Waltz’, op. 118.

The fertility of Lanner and Strauss was truly prodigious. The greater their fame, the higher the demands made on them by an insatiable public for ever fresh waltzes, marches, galops, polkas and quadrilles. Only those orchestras that would provide an unceasing stream of new dances could hope to maintain their popularity, their reputation, and last but by no means least, their financial security. As always in the field of light music, the hit of to-day is stale by to-morrow, and forgotten the day after. Strauss and Lanner had to turn out music on tap, as it were, which partly explains their immense productivity, the output of each running to about 250 works.

It was, however, inevitable that with such mass-production the quality of the music should suffer. It was often slipshod and manufactured, and fell into well-tried effects and clichés. Lanner and Strauss could not afford to wait for inspiration. If it did not come readily, they would frequently turn to the “waltzification” of well-known operatic music—a practice dating, as will be remembered, back to Mozart’s time. Thus we find a number of waltzes based on tunes from popular operas by Mozart, Auber, Hérold and Meyerbeer (Strauss: ‘Zampa-Waltz’, op. 57, Cotillions from *La Muette de Portici* (*Masaniello*), op. 32, and *The Huguenots*, op. 92; Lanner: ‘Die Mozartisten’ on motives from *The Magic Flute* and *Don Giovanni*). Pure instrumental music also found its way into Viennese waltzes, as in Strauss’s ‘Cäcilien-Waltz’, op. 120, with motives from Beethoven’s “Kreutzer” Sonata, and Lanner’s ‘Invitation to the Dance’, op. 7, after motives from Weber.

A word about the titles. The custom of giving a title to the waltz seems to have originated with Lanner and Strauss. Originally the dances were simply called “Deutsche” or “Walzer” (Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven),

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**PART I.**

Overture.....	<i>(Pré aux Clercs.)</i> .....	<i>Herold.</i>
Les Hommages Walzer.....	.....	<i>Strauss.</i>
Grand Fantaśia, "Reminiscences of Herold."	.....	<i>Frisch.</i>
Huguenots Galope.....	.....	<i>Strauss.</i>
Les Bouquets.....	.....	<i>Strauß.</i>

**PART II.**

Ball-Racketen Walzer.....	.....	<i>Strauss.</i>
Fantasia for the Harp, composed and performed by.....	.....	<i>March.</i>
Le Telegraphe Musicale, a Grand Pot-pourri.....	.....	<i>Strauss.</i>
Paris Walzer.....	.....	<i>Strauss.</i>

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BILL OF A LONDON CONCERT  
 GIVEN BY JOHANN STRAUSS SEN.

occasionally with a reference to the place for which or in which they were composed (Schubert's Grätzer and Atzenbrugger dances). Then publishers, in order to attract the public; began to issue albums under special titles such as *Carneval* (1823) and *Ernst und Tändeley* (1825) which, cheek by jowl, contained dances by Beethoven, Schubert, Hummel, Czerny, Gyrowetz and others. Finally, it became the practice to give individual waltzes a special title, as the public was more likely to remember, for instance, 'Die Schönbrunner' than Waltz in F, op. 200.

These titles indicated a variety of things: the locale for which the dance was written (Strauss's opus 1, 'Täuberl Waltz', from the inn "The Two Doves"); great festive and official occasions such as masked balls; artistic, political and social events (Strauss's 'Hietzinger Reunion Waltz', op. 24, the above-mentioned 'Victoria Waltz', the 'Taglioni Waltz' for the famous Italian dancer Marie Taglioni, the 'Swedish Songs' in memory of the Swedish singer Jenny Lind, and Lanner's 'Court-Ball Dances' and 'The Storming of Constantine').



QUEEN VICTORIA AND THE PRINCE CONSORT WALTZING  
*Coloured lithograph, c. 1845*

A title beginning with “Souvenir de” always suggested a journey, such as Strauss’s ‘Souvenir de Pesth’. Others again hint at a programme as do Lanner’s ‘Separation Waltz’ and ‘The Swimmers’ or Strauss’s ‘The Four Temperaments’, op. 59, and ‘Remedy against Sleep’, op. 65.

Lanner and Strauss laid the foundation for the true Viennese waltz and developed all the essential features which the younger Strauss merged into a more or less organic whole. Following the example of Weber’s ‘Invitation’, they established the extended waltz introduction. From the short two- and four-bar openings of the early waltz they proceeded to proper preludes,

some just long enough to give the dancers time to arrange themselves in couples, the so-called "Tusch" (most of Strauss's introductions are of that type), and others in the nature of marches, overtures or simple miniature tone-poems.

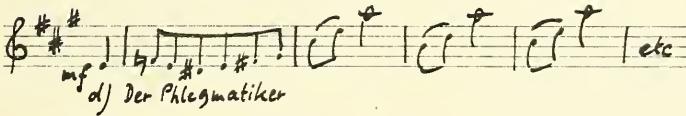
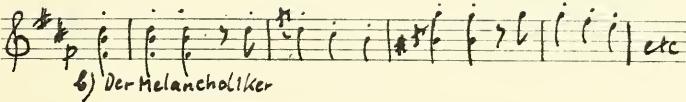
This influence from a different sphere of music was due to the fact that Lanner and Strauss included arrangements of popular operas and symphonic music in their programmes. The operatic element is particularly noticeable in the orchestration, which is brilliant yet often noisy and blatant, with effects borrowed chiefly from Rossini, who in the eighteen-twenties was the craze of Vienna.

Lanner's introductions frequently consist of several sections different in mood, tempo and rhythm. Like Haydn's symphonic introductions with their mock gravity, they are often in a solemn, serious mood, with the result that the listener is greatly startled by the incongruous light-heartedness of the ensuing waltzes, as in 'The Humorists', op. 92, where the sombre introduction in A minor at first completely belies the title. Some of these preludes are truly inspired poetic mood-pictures such as the beautiful opening of 'The Romanticists', op. 167, a piece of almost Schubertian flavour. Others again capture a certain local colour: the fiery tarantella in 'The Neapolitans', and the Hungarian march in 'The Pesthers', op. 93. One clearly feels that Lanner aimed at a more elaborate orchestral introduction, particularly in those of a poetical character, and it is from here that Johann Strauss the younger later evolved his quasi-symphonic waltz introductions.

As for the waltzes themselves, Lanner and Strauss reduced the unlimited number customary before their time to an average of five waltzes to a set, though exceptions occur as in Strauss's two 'Waltz Garlands', opp. 67 and 77, and Lanner's gigantic 'The Waltz Flood' or 'Twenty Years in Twenty Minutes', op. 129, where a wellnigh unending chain of old and new waltzes are strung together.

The form of Lanner's and Strauss's waltzes is essentially the same as Schubert's: usually two sixteen-bar phrases as Part One and Part Two, which are repeated, and often with Part One rounding off the whole section. There is commonly a strong melodic contrast between the two parts, the first usually being lyrical and sustained, and the second more energetic and markedly rhythmical, or vice versa; this also applies to the sequence of the waltzes in the whole set. Such contrasts were often exploited for the suggestion of simple programmatic purposes, as in Strauss's 'The Four Temperaments', op. 59, where four different waltzes suggest, respectively, the sanguine, the melancholy, the choleric and the phlegmatic types:

*You Must Dance, I Command You*



For the sake of formal unity, the sets are rounded off by a coda or finale of considerable length, in which the principal waltz themes recur in a free, often mosaic-like fashion, as in a potpourri.

A word or two on the orchestration. We have already seen how Lanner's modest trio grew to the size of a more or less full classical orchestra. But even with such an enlarged body of players Lanner and Strauss adhered to the practice of their time, in alternately conducting and playing, now using the violin bow as baton, now joining the orchestra on the instrument, a practice which, incidentally, is still alive in the Viennese dance orchestra. And this brings us to an important point. Both Lanner and Strauss were brilliant fiddlers and hence a great deal of their composition is true violin music, born of the genius of the instrument. To the Viennese dance composer of those days the violin was what the cymbalom is to the gipsy and the guitar to the Spaniard.

This violin character is the hall-mark of the Viennese waltz. Many a waltz of Lanner and Strauss originated in simple violin improvisations

which were later elaborated and scored for full orchestra. Hence the abundance of characteristic violin effects such as the exploitation of the open strings which explains the frequent choice of G, D, A and E as the main key of a whole waltz set; double-stoppings, euphonious sixths and "sobbing" thirds which, combined with frequent glissandi, impart to the Viennese waltz a slightly languid sentimental note; wide leaps over the strings from the E to the G strings; tunes to be played on the fourth string, and all the effects produced by different bowing—legato, staccato, spiccato, saltando, *sul ponticello*—and short, crisp up-bows, notably at the opening of a waltz. (The *sul ponticello*, or playing near the bridge, was particularly favoured by the Linz dance bands which referred to it as "schnofeln" or "snorting".) Naturally, effects on other instruments were not neglected, woodwind and brass being often given interesting details; but on the whole it was the brilliant and sympathetic treatment of the violins that lent the orchestra of Lanner and Strauss its characteristic stamp.

Nor must we forget the ingenuity with which Lanner and Strauss attempted to reduce the feeling of rhythmic monotony, as far as this is possible in a dance waltz. The basic One-two-three of the bass could obviously not be changed without impairing the true waltz character, hence it was the melody into which Lanner and Strauss introduced a variety of rhythmic changes such as cross-rhythms, syncopations, subtle divisions of the metre, the use of dotted-note figures and carefully calculated rests, all of which tend to weaken the tyranny of the regular  $\frac{3}{4}$  beat. And when such things combine with melodic felicities and an attractive instrumental garb, we get such delightful examples as Lanner's 'Die Werber', 'The Romantics', 'Court-Ball Dances', 'Schönbunner', and Strauss's 'Donaulieder', 'Loreley-Rhein-Klänge', 'Die Adepten' and 'Aeaciden'.

It is difficult to see the difference between the early waltzes of Lanner and Strauss. They seem the work of one man. Both first wrote waltzes in the *ländler* style, and even later true waltzes and *ländlers* are mixed in one and the same set as in Lanner's 'Zauberhorn-Ländler', op. 31. Yet it is significant that while Lanner still called his opus 1 'Wiener *Ländler*', Strauss, starting with composition later than his friend, already entitled his first set 'Täuberl-Walzer'. Even in their late waltzes the influence from alpine music and Austrian and Viennese folk-songs is still felt, notably in those entitled "Im *Ländlerstil*" (In *Ländler* Style). But as time went on such rustic elements became more refined and urbane.

Lanner was undoubtedly the more inspired and poetical of the two, and possessed a richer fund of melodic invention. His late waltzes, especially, are

‘You Must Dance, I Command You’.

marked by a wide sweep and a remarkable shapeliness of the melody, which often has a truly Schubertian tenderness and lyrical feeling about it.



Altogether, Lanner's mature waltzes often breathe the sweet fresh air of early romanticism.

With the exception of a handful or so of waltzes, his rival Strauss lacked this poetical vein. Moreover, his melodies are mostly short-winded and consist of neat little figures stuck together. In his harmonies he is conventional, often dry, and without Lanner's unexpected modulations. His strong points were his racy, irresistible rhythm, and the great *élan* which he imparted to his waltzes by piquant syncopations, dotted figures and an abundance of trills and “wrong” accents.

Compare the examples and you cannot miss the difference of style in the later waltzes of the two composers. The Viennese put this in a nutshell by saying: “With Lanner, it's ‘Pray dance, I entreat you’, with Strauss, ‘You must dance, I command you’.” Posterity has given judgment to Lanner. While Strauss, significantly enough, is nowadays chiefly remembered by one of his racy marches, the *Radetzky March*, quite a number of Lanner's waltzes almost rival the popularity of those by Johann Strauss the younger.





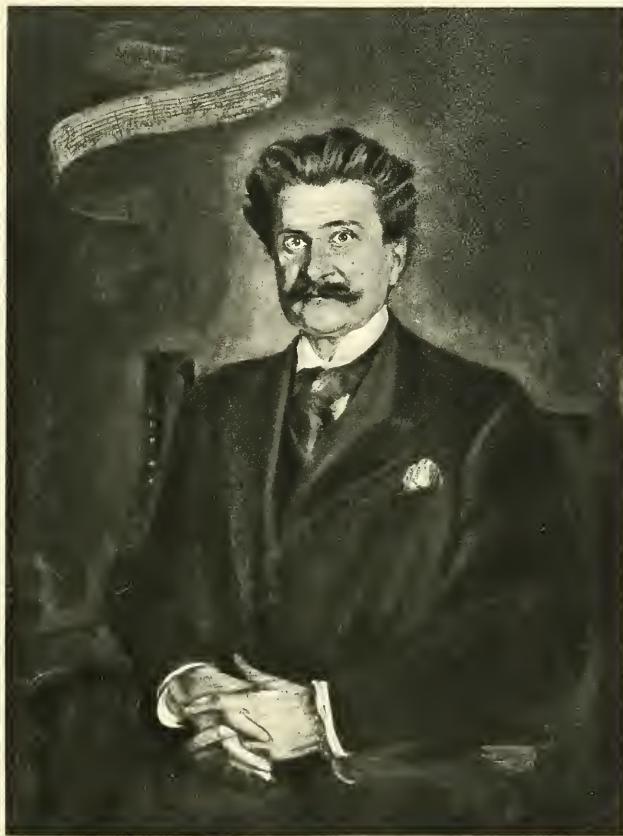
#### IV

#### THE SPARK OF A GREAT GENIUS

OTHER obscured by the fame of Lanner and Strauss senior, there were a number of Viennese waltz composers who, though much less original than their two great contemporaries, contributed to the establishment of the Viennese waltz style, such as Josef Gunzl (1810-89), whose charming 'Amoretten-Tänze' are still delightful to hear, Josef Labitzky (1802-81) and Wilhelm Fahrbach (1798-1866). Lanner's son, August, made a most promising start, but died too young to achieve much.

It was the two sons of Strauss, Johann (1825-99) and Josef (1827-70), who were destined not only to carry on the tradition but to give to the Viennese waltz its consummate and classical form. The youngest son, Eduard (1835-1916), was chiefly known as the conductor of the famous Strauss orchestra. In sharp contrast to their father, they were all more or less well-trained musicians, though Johann was for a time a bank clerk and Josef an engineer. This "false start" was due to the father's strong opposition to their choice of a musical career.

October 15, 1844, marked an important date in the history of the waltz. It was the day on which the nineteen-year-old Johann conducted his first concert with his own orchestra at Dommayer's Casino in suburban Hietzing. Along with overtures and operatic excerpts, the programme included several



JOHANN STRAUSS THE YOUNGER  
Painting by Franz von Lenbach, 1891

of his own compositions such as his very first waltz, 'Sinngedichte', and 'Die Gunstwerber', op. 4, specially composed for this occasion.

This venture, undertaken in the teeth of his father's strong opposition, was in the nature of a challenge, and bespoke great courage and self-confidence on the part of the young composer. The concert proved a sensational success. The Viennese poet Joh. Nepomuk Vogl, comparing him with the elder Strauss, wrote the next day: "Talent is not the monopoly of one man . . . it can be inherited. The boy is a pretty good conductor with the same flow of melody, the same piquant instrumentation as his

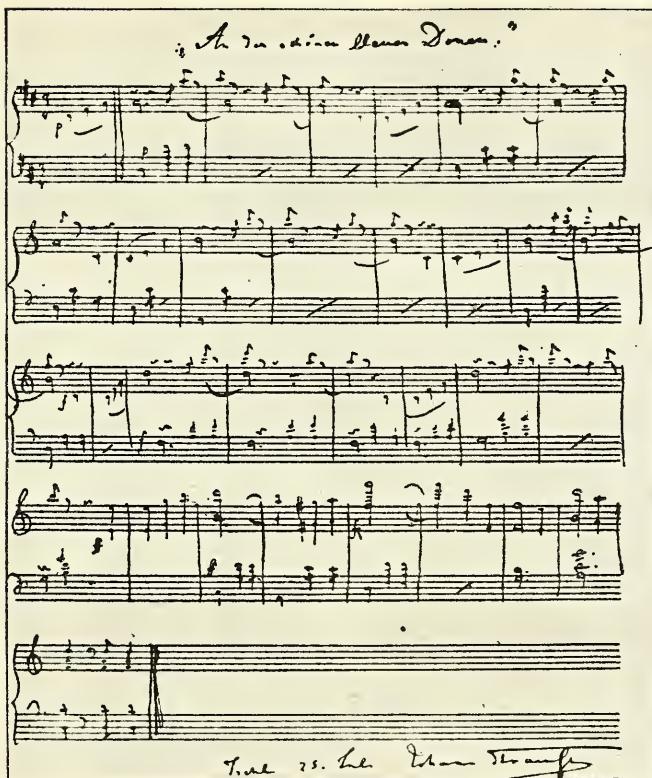
father's, and yet there is no slavish imitation of the paternal style." With his first public appearance Strauss established himself as his father's most serious rival. Despite a superficial reconciliation brought about in later years, a strained relation remained between father and son until the former's death in 1849, when Johann took over his orchestra and merged it with his own.

From about 1860 until his death, Strauss kept Europe in a veritable waltz mania. He was his country's most successful ambassador; his music seemed to embody the spirit of the Hapsburg monarchy. "The Emperor Francis Joseph I", it was later said, "only reigned until the death of Johann Strauss."

All his music was written during one of Vienna's most glamorous periods. Strauss lived in the Vienna of the *Gründerzeit*, a period of feverish building activity. The old city walls, where Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert had walked, disappeared to make room for the magnificent Ringstrasse, both sides of which were now flanked by new public buildings showing a bewildering conglomeration of sham Gothic, Baroque, Renaissance and neo-classicism, such as the Imperial Opera, the Burgtheater, the University, the House of Parliament, the Town Hall and the two huge Museums of Art and Natural History. In this temporary prosperity and the sumptuous splendour of the new Vienna, there was as yet no hint at the worm of decay that had already begun its insidious work of undermining the very foundations of the Hapsburg Empire. It was an era that brought out the innate hedonism of the Viennese in a most revealing manner.

In this atmosphere of glitter and reckless gaiety Strauss wrote his music. Its elegance, charm and sophistication spoke of a Vienna very different from the parochial and rather provincial town Schubert, Lanner and the elder Strauss had known. Just as Offenbach, his great rival, represented a whole epoch of French life, so Strauss typified the Austria of the late nineteenth century. The music he wrote no longer breathed the air of country inns, low city pubs and vulgar beer-gardens, but reflected a society that enjoyed itself in the great masked balls and "dance reunions" given in the elegant halls of the Sophien-Säle, the Redouten-Säle, Dianabad and other similar places. It was for the Dianabad-Säle that Strauss wrote some of his most famous waltzes, e.g. 'The Blue Danube', 'Artist's Life' and 'Tales from the Vienna Woods'.

Strauss's total output amounts to some half a thousand works, including operettas, waltzes, polkas, galops, quadrilles, mazurkas and marches. With the exception of a few operettas, it is in the waltzes that he has given his best. There are about 160 waltzes, many of them rather ordinary and merely



'THE BLUE DANUBE'  
An autograph pianoforte score

manufactured pieces, a fact not to be wondered at in view of the mass-production to which Strauss, like his predecessors, was forced by the clamorous demands of his public. A great many of his early waltzes are (*pace Vogl*) hardly distinguishable from those of his father: the same rhythmic verve and piquancy, the same mosaics of rather short-winded tunes built up of crisp little motives.

Greater individuality, however, emerges with growing maturity. Strauss's theoretical training, short and casual as it had been, enabled him to make some good use of the new harmonic and orchestral devices with which Liszt and Wagner were startling their audiences in the eighteen-fifties and eighteen-sixties. (It must be remembered that, like Lanner and

his father, Strauss included in his programmes excerpts from the operatic and symphonic music of his day, which inevitably coloured his own style.) He was a great admirer of Wagner, and when Vienna first turned down *Tristan*, on account of its supposedly insurmountable difficulties, Strauss did yeoman service to Wagner by conducting the Prelude and the Liebestod in his Volksgarten concerts.

For a time Strauss became a firm Wagnerite and enthusiastically embraced the tenets of the new German school. This earned him vicious attacks from Hanslick, the powerful critic of the *Neue Freie Presse* and Vienna's musical Pope, who, hating anything and everything that smacked of Liszt and Wagner, condemned Strauss for "flirting with the Muses of Weimar" (Liszt's residence). He strongly, and perhaps not quite unjustifiably, objected to Strauss's introduction into the waltz form of symphonic features that "by rights would have their place of honour in the symphonies of the newest school". "Those stilted themes combining endless periods and highly sophisticated harmonies", he declared, "irritate both ear and foot." He accused Strauss of "smuggling into his waltzes a false theatricality" and sarcastically referred to "miserable chord progressions tossed about by the trombones which might be suitable in an operatic finale full of blood and thunder, but which in a waltz are horrible", and declared Strauss's themes "with their sprawling eight-bar motives, their groaning diminished sevenths and ninths, their thundering trombones and drums" to be unfit for dancing. "What is left for Meyerbeer's next opera", Hanslick finally exclaims, "if Strauss continues to write such waltz requiems?"

But many of the features which from his narrow and biased point of view Hanslick regarded as faults, were the very things that gave the Strauss waltz its special and individual stamp. The "endless periods, highly sophisticated harmonies" and the quasi-symphonic element distinguished the Strauss waltzes from those of Lanner and of his father. At first Strauss went too far in this respect, obscuring the fundamental waltz rhythm and the clarity of the melody, as he did in his 'Schallwellen', 'Wellen und Wogen', 'Schneeglöckchen', all written in the early fifties. He thus often impaired the primary function of a dance waltz and irritated not only Hanslick but the dancers, who cared little for symphonic elaboration and harmonic finesse, but expected a simple tuneful melody in a clear One-two-three. Yet in his mature waltzes Strauss found the balance between a quasi-symphonic treatment and the true dance element.

The series of master waltzes—his 'Accelerationen' of 1860 is already a pointer—opens in 1864 with the delightful 'Morgenblätter', or 'Morning



'MORNING PAPERS'  
Title-page of the waltz by Johann Strauss jun.

Papers'. The title is a pun on the German *Blätter*, meaning both "leaves" and "newspapers". Strauss wrote it for Vienna's journalists' association "Concordia", as a pendant to the 'Abendblätter' or 'Evening Papers' by Offenbach, who during his visit to the Austrian capital in 1864 had been invited by this association to dedicate a waltz to them. It was followed by other great waltzes such as 'An der schönen blauen Donau' ('The Blue Danube'), 'Künstlerleben' ('Artist's Life'), 'Geschichten aus dem Wienerwald' ('Tales from the Vienna Woods'), 'Wein, Weib und Gesang'.

In 1871 Strauss began to turn to operettas and thus the composition of independent waltz sets was interrupted for a time. The incentive to try his hand at this more ambitious kind of composition came from Offenbach, whose brilliant operettas, models of Gallic wit and parody, had created a sensation in Vienna. Moreover, Franz von Suppé (1819–95), a Viennese contemporary of Strauss, had, under Offenbach's influence, already started to write the first Viennese operettas (*Die schöne Galathee*, 1865, *Leichte Kavallerie*, 1866, *Boccaccio*, 1879). Strauss's ambition was roused, and starting with *Indigo*, he wrote for the rest of his life chiefly for the musical stage.

There are altogether sixteen Strauss operettas, with *Die Fledermaus* (1874) and *Der Zigeunerbaron* (1885) as the prototypes of the Viennese classical operetta. Of the rest some have been occasionally revived, with but little success, since Strauss, fundamentally an instrumental composer, had little understanding of vocal composition and, what is more, was sadly lacking in dramatic sense. The thing that rescues them from complete oblivion is the waltzes. Unlike its French and English cousins, the Viennese classical operetta is largely based on the waltz. The waltz is its very life-blood and some of Strauss's most beautiful numbers are to be found in his operettas: the 'Cagliostro' waltz (from the operetta of the same name, 1875), 'Rosen aus dem Süden' (*Das Spitzentuch der Königin*, 1880) and the 'Lagunen' waltz (*Eine Nacht in Venedig*, 1883), not to mention the 'Du und Du' waltz from *Die Fledermaus* and the 'Schatzwalzer' from *Der Zigeunerbaron*.

In the eighties Strauss again returned to writing independent waltzes, such as the delightful 'Frühlingsstimmen', the noble 'Kaiserwalzer' ('Emperor Waltz') and 'Seid umschlungen, Millionen'—the latter dedicated to Brahms. 'Frühlingsstimmen' is, incidentally, the only independent vocal waltz by Strauss, and has found innumerable followers, the best-known of which is Ardit's 'Il Baccio' waltz.

What is the secret of the great Strauss waltzes? What was it that made them so famous? On the occasion of the celebration of his fiftieth jubilee as conductor, Strauss, then a septuagenarian, modestly described his waltzes as—"feeble attempts to extend the form handed down to me by my father and Lanner". To this, an obvious understatement, we may add that he filled the traditional waltz form with such rich musical content that some of his great waltzes are as much concert pieces as they are first-rate dance music. While in Austria and Germany, Strauss's classical waltzes and some of his other dances often figure in the programmes of serious symphonic concerts, in this country (due, I suggest, to a false sense of musical aesthetics) they are relegated to the music-hall, variety shows and the *café-concert*.

As Strauss implied in the above statement, he adhered to the formal scheme of his predecessors: an introduction, a suite of (usually) five waltzes, and a coda. In his early waltzes the introduction is not much longer than those of Lanner and his father. Yet later he aimed at a real orchestral prelude, extending it in some cases to an almost self-contained piece. The longest introductions are found in 'Wein, Weib und Gesang' (17 pages of full score), 'Geschichten aus dem Wienerwald' (11 pages) and 'Kaiserwalzer' (10 pages), proportions varying between half and one-third the length of the main waltz section. They are often in the character of a mood-picture and show certain

*The Spark of a Great Genius*



programmatic features: the waves of the river ('Blue Danube'), the pastoral atmosphere of the 'Vienna Woods suggested by a *ländler* played on the zither ('Geschichten'), gathering crowds illustrated by a march ('Kaiserwalzer'), and so on.

These introductions are Strauss's chief playground for his quasi-symphonic tendency. There is, however, no true symphonic feeling in the sense of a sustained organic growth of ideas; these introductions are orchestral fantasies decked out with the external trappings of a symphonic style: development passages, a more elaborate texture, interesting harmonic details, and above all, a remarkably rich and varied palette of orchestral colours, in places toned down to the delicate pastels of chamber-music effects.

Like Lanner's these introductions consist of several sections different in character, but Strauss's superiority is evident not only in their more shapely form and their richer musical content, but in their more organic connection with the ensuing waltzes. They are often based upon or anticipate motives from the waltzes, as in 'The Blue Danube', 'Wein, Weib und Gesang', 'Geschichten' and 'Kaiserwalzer'. Most of them open quietly,

gradually work up to a broad climax, and then subside before the entry of the first waltz.

Similarly, the codas show a remarkable extension: 22 pages of full score in the 'Kaiserwalzer', 19 pages in 'The Blue Danube', and 16 pages in 'Künstlerleben' and 'Rosen aus dem Süden' ('Roses from the South'). One may compare them with a potpourri in which some of the best waltz tunes heard before recur again. In some of these codas, Strauss interrupts the flow of the dance by introducing reminiscences in slow tempo, a clear pointer to the veiled concert character of his mature waltzes ('Geschichten' and 'Kaiserwalzer'). The composer was apparently very proud of his long codas, and when 'The Blue Danube', at its first performance at the Dianabad in 1867, did not have the expected success, he is supposed to have said to his brother Josef: "The Devil take the waltz, I'm only sorry for the coda. I would have wished success to *that*."

For both dancers and listeners, however, the main attraction lies in the actual waltzes. Here, and it is Strauss's greatest achievement, he combines his father's rhythmic vitality with Lanner's lyrical charm and tunefulness. Out of this happy amalgam of "Schmiss und Schmalz"—a Viennese slang expression for snappy rhythm and rich tunefulness—Strauss created his own style. True, the form of the individual waltzes is the traditional one of two sections of sixteen or thirty-two bars each, with the first section often repeated after the second. But within this time-honoured scheme, Strauss greatly extends the sweep of the melody.

As with Lanner and his father, he mostly builds up his melodies by varied repetition and sequence, but in his mature waltzes his motifs are much less short-winded and, above all, he allows the melodies to grow from within in a natural organic way. Take the opening waltz of 'The Blue Danube', which grows from the minute germ of a simple D major arpeggio into an articulated and well-balanced tune of thirty-two bars, and observe the wide unbroken span of the melody in waltz no. 2 of the 'Roses from the South', and the openings of the 'Kiss Waltz'. And what rich variety there is in the waltz themes! Rolling, stamping and swaying figures, figures full of yearning interspersed with chromatic appoggiaturas so as to enhance the feeling of urgency; sensuous and languishing tunes, gay, capricious and saucy tunes which electrify both ear and foot. It is, in short, Viennese music *par excellence*, far more refined and polished than Lanner's and his father's, and lit up by the spark of a great genius.

Hand in hand with his rich melodic invention goes a nervous, bouncing rhythm, often so varied that it makes one forget the mechanical thump of



DANCE OF VIENNESE LAUNDRY-GIRLS  
Painting by Josef Engelhart, 1896  
Städtische Sammlungen, Vienna

the accompaniment. How irritating for the dancers, but how intriguing to our rhythmic sense, when Strauss upsets the pattern of the regular three-four beat by interspersing a two-beat pattern, or when he resorts to unsymmetrical phrasings, and subtly articulates the melody by a close contrast of different rhythmic patterns!

Strauss's orchestration of the waltzes, necessarily less subtle than in the introduction, is rich, colourful and often sumptuous. To a much larger extent than either Lanner or his father he makes pointed use of the wind instruments and percussion. Short imitative passages and counterpoints in the middle parts are often given to the brass, and the woodwind are not only employed to reinforce the violin part but embellish the texture with figurations and embroideries of an almost Mozartian brilliance. Yet for all these improvements, Strauss preserves the essential feature of Viennese waltz orchestrations. A brilliant violinist himself, he often invents tunes that have the true "feel" of the violin about them, with all the typical effects mentioned in connection with Lanner and the elder Strauss.

As we said, Strauss's great waltzes are the music of a true genius. Comparing them with the production of his local Viennese contemporaries, Katzenberger, "Zwickerl" Mayer, Turnofski, Petzmayer, the "Schwomma" Weidinger, Sperl, Bertl, Gruber, drives home his artistic and technical superiority. He had no true successor. The one who during his lifetime came nearest to rivalling him was his brother, the "chaotically pale" Josef, as the Viennese called him because of his romantic looks and his serious, brooding temperament. But Josef, originally an engineer and successful inventor, took up his musical career rather late in life, and only under Johann's pressure. He died in his early forties.

Josef was a more profound musician than Johann; there is more poetry and romantic warmth in his music, and on the whole he seemed a better craftsman, particularly in his use of subtle harmonic colours. Indicative of his temperament is his preference for modulations to minor keys. Josef was unable to write with such spontaneity and lightness as his brother, but he left a number of waltzes which are as good as, if not better than, Johann's great sets. These include 'Dorfenschwalben aus Österreich', 'Delirien', with chromatic harmonies reminiscent of Chopin and Wagner, 'Sphärenklänge', 'Transaktionen', and 'Mein Lebenslauf ist Lieb und Lust', which provided the motto tune to the music of the film *Congress Dances*. And he wrote a little-known waltz that was to leave its mark on the most famous of operatic waltzes. For Josef Strauss's 'Dynamiden', or 'The Mysterious Powers of Magnetism', exercised its magnetism, though not so mysteriously, on

Richard Strauss when he wrote his *Rosenkavalier* waltzes. The similarity of its opening with the main waltz theme from *Rosenkavalier* is too striking to pass as a mere coincidence:

It may be as well to say a word or two here on the traditional manner of playing the Strauss waltzes and the Viennese waltzes in general. As Lanner and the Straussses mostly conducted their music themselves, they thought it superfluous to indicate the finer points of interpretation in the MS. scores, a habit strongly reminiscent of eighteenth-century practice. Moreover, many of these MS. scores are lost. (With few exceptions the full scores now available of Lanner and the Strauss family have been compiled from orchestral parts and piano arrangements of the time. Strauss, for instance, edited his father's collected work only in a piano transcription.) Yet it is these finer points that form the unwritten tradition to which the playing of the Viennese waltzes must conform if they are to produce all the effect intended by their composers.

Reference has already been made to the slight anticipation of the second beat which adds to the rhythmic swing. Moreover, there is the so-called "Einschleifen" or slow gliding-in at the opening of a waltz, before the true tempo is taken up. To this must be added slight *rubati*, sudden pauses and short "Atempausen", or breaks of the phrases (see the famous *Fledermaus* waltz), all of which contribute to the rhythmic piquancy of the music.

The general pace of the Viennese waltz is moderate ( $\text{♩} = 60-69$ ), which allows for rhythmic flexibility and ease. Without these liberties the Viennese waltz is bound to lose some of its most attractive features. They are part and parcel of its style.

While Strauss thus dominated the scene of Viennese light music, there were a number of minor contemporaries who must not be forgotten. Some, like F. Wagner, Komzák and Ziehrer carried on the tradition of writing

independent waltzes. Others concentrated on the operetta, of which, as has already been said, the waltzes form the mainstay. These included Suppé, the founder of the Viennese operetta; Millöcker (*Der Bettelstudent*, 1882, *Der arme Jonathan*, 1890); Genée (*Der Seekadett*, 1876); and Zeller (*Der Vogelhändler* and *Der Obersteiger*). Other composers carrying the tradition into the twentieth century and almost up to our time include Eysler, Fall, Oscar Straus, Lehár, Kálmán, Benatzky and Stolz.

Yet with the collapse of the Austrian Empire, Vienna lost much of its glamour and gaiety, and this was reflected in Viennese light music. Its gradual decay, noticeable already in the first decade of our century, showed itself in the use of worn-out clichés, of a pretentious harmonic and orchestral language, and, above all, in a lush and cloying sentimentality. The death of Johann Strauss marked the end of Vienna's heyday of light music.

It was only natural that the sensational success of the Strauss waltzes should have stimulated dance composers all over the globe. Hence the rise of national waltzes in many countries. In Jacques Offenbach (1819-80), André Messager (1853-1929) and Emile Waldteufel (1837-1915) France, especially, produced composers who excelled in light music and wrote a number of delightful waltzes. The first two introduced them in their many operettas, while Waldteufel concentrated on independent waltz sets which run into several hundreds ('España', 'Estudiantina', 'Pluie d'or', 'Je t'aime', 'Mon Rêve', 'Les Patineurs', etc.). Where the French waltz does not imitate its more rustic Viennese cousin, it shows, generally speaking, a languid and feminine note, and prefers a more deliberate pace. Much akin to the French type is the more modern "English waltz" or "Boston" which is even slower and more sentimental than its French counterpart. One of its chief characteristics is the tendency to suppress the true waltz rhythm by a sarabande-like emphasis on the second beat, or a complete omission of chords on the second and third beats.



## CONCERT PITCH

So far we have dealt mainly with the waltz as pure dance music. Yet that is only part of its chequered history. Parallel to this ran its development as a concert piece, that is, as music to be listened to and appreciated on account of its purely artistic merits. This had two main forms: the waltz for piano solo or a small chamber music combination (duets, trios and quartets); and the orchestral or symphonic waltz. Notwithstanding their difference of style, which was chiefly dictated by the difference of medium, these two groups have a number of features in common.

The fact that they were no longer intended for dancing freed the composers from irksome limitations in form and general treatment, and this in turn allowed them a wide scope for enriching the waltz with all the characteristic features of romantic instrumental music, such as rich and varied harmonies, a colourful orchestration, the introduction of symphonic devices, and so on. This, and the considerable improvements made during the nineteenth century in orchestral instruments (wind instruments with valves) and piano-making (hammer action, extension of compass, easy note-repetition) explain the highly elaborate and brilliant character of the romantic concert waltz, which now began to take its rightful place along with such typically romantic character-pieces as nocturnes, intermezzos, capriccios and scherzos.

First the piano waltzes. We have already mentioned Hummel and Weber who laid the foundation of the romantic concert waltz for piano at the beginning of the nineteenth century. They were followed by a host of later composers who favoured this short, simple form in their piano music. The most outstanding examples were written by Chopin, Liszt and Brahms.

Chopin composed altogether fourteen waltzes belonging to different periods of his life. Like much of his music, they reflect in many ways the world of the French salon of the thirties and forties. In most of them, notably those entitled 'Grande Valse Brillante', Chopin develops the type found in Hummel's and Weber's waltzes: sparkling virtuoso pieces, enriched by his individual manner. (Like Hummel's Viennese piano, Chopin's Pleyel had an easy, light touch, which goes far in explaining his brilliant piano style.) Others again belong to the type described as *valse mélancolique, triste, sentimentale*, a genre which apparently started with Schubert, and was later particularly favoured by Tchaikovsky and the romantic lyricists. Like

Schubert, whose dances he probably never heard, Chopin is fond of waltzes in a minor key, which are often permeated with a certain Slavonic wistfulness as, for instance, the waltz in A minor, op. 34, no. 2; in C sharp minor, op. 64, no. 2; and in F minor, op. 70, no. 2. The one in C sharp minor is, incidentally, a specially beautiful example of the composer's superb art of combining an expressive lyrical style with rhythmic delicacy and brilliant passage work.

Most of the waltzes are in Chopin's favourite ternary form, A—B—A, or some extension of this basic scheme, and are rounded off by a coda. A few are cast in the usual form of dance waltzes, namely a string of four different waltzes (op. 18, op. 42), and some (op. 34, no. 1; op. 42) show an interesting novelty in that Chopin tacks on to each section or waltz a kind of refrain, reminiscent of the ritornel in a rondo. On the whole, Chopin keeps to the characteristic waltz rhythm, though he often upsets it by stressing the weak beats (appoggiaturas, accents and trills on the second and third beat), by drawing the ending of the melody across the strong beat, and by casting the phrase in asymmetrical patterns (see the *sostenuto* section of op. 42, and the opening of the waltz, with the intriguing cross-rhythm of two beats in the melody against three in the accompaniment).

Needless to add, with a composer such as Chopin, the waltzes are born of the genius of the instrument. They are true piano music in which, as a critic once aptly put it, Chopin turns "the essential weakness of the hand to beautiful account".

While Chopin wrote for more intimate circles, Liszt intended his piano music to be heard in the large concert halls which were just coming into fashion. His waltzes are much more superficially brilliant and showy than Chopin's, but on the whole of less musical substance. Most of them are not much more than sublimated *salon*-music, but most effective in the dazzle and glitter of the piano writing, and such waltzes as the 'Valses Oubliées' nos. 1 and 2, and the 'Valse Impromptu', show an attractive delicacy of harmonic detail. Liszt's 'Mephisto' waltz no. 3, though much less inspired than the orchestral waltzes of the same name (see later), achieves an amazing *tour de force* of piano technique. In his insatiable desire for transcribing other men's music, Liszt also wrote a most effective paraphrase of Gounod's *Faust* Waltz; a waltz on motives from Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*; and his well-known 'Soirées de Vienne' after some of Schubert's waltzes.

In contrast to the Chopin and Liszt examples are the waltzes by Brahms (Waltzes for piano duet, op. 39, and the two sets of 'Liebeslieder' waltzes for piano duet and vocal quartet, opp. 52 and 65). Here is a more homely



DONIZETTI'S 'LUCIA DI LAMMERMOOR'  
Title-page of the *Ravenswood Waltzes* arranged by Jullien

product, reflecting the genial, intimate atmosphere of the composer's Viennese circle of friends. Yet what they lack in brilliance, sparkle and dash is amply made up by their lyrical charm and the wealth of rhythmic and harmonic details. In their short and simple form they look back to Schubert, from whom Brahms seems to have inherited the love for slow *ländler*-like waltzes. The Austrian dance element is also found in some of Brahms's songs such as "Der Schmied", "Sonntag", "Vergebliches Ständchen", "Wiegenlied" and others.

Like Schubert, Brahms arranged his waltz sets in a rather loose string without set progress and climax, yet not without effective contrast of mood, key and texture. And again like Schubert, Brahms's inspiration lights up with particular beauty in the sad nostalgic waltzes of a minor key. While in the vocal waltzes the Austrian note prevails, in the piano set we seem to hear traces of Chopin (nos. 6 and 10) and Hungarian peasant music (nos. 4 and 11), with Brahms making his very individual voice heard in characteristic syncopations, intriguing cross-rhythms, chromatic harmonies and subtleties of texture as, for instance, in the "contrapuntal" waltz no. 16.

It seems strange that Schumann, in whose piano music the dance element plays such an essential part (the poetic ideas behind his great piano cycles are imaginary ball-room scenes), should never have thought of writing independent sets of waltzes. However, there is a sufficient number of single waltzes to be found in these cycles to prove his predilection for this dance. Like Brahms, Schumann follows in the main the Schubertian type of short pieces in binary and ternary form which fluctuate between the heavy "Deutscher" and the gentler romantic waltz. There is often a fantastic element in them, and compared to Brahms's they have more swing and fire. Their interesting harmonic details, their characteristic syncopations and the elaborate texture, notably of the middle parts, may well have influenced Schumann's younger friend.

Of the host of other composers who have written piano waltzes without, however, achieving great distinction in this genre, mention may be made only of the most important. Some of them, following the trend of the time, introduced a certain national note into their waltzes, such as the Russians with Tchaikovsky, Liadov, Rubinstein and Glazounov, the Czechs with Smetana and Dvořák (no. 12 of the Slavonic Dances is a Czech waltz) and the Scandinavians with Grieg (Waltz Caprices, op. 37). Sibelius wrote a number of instrumental waltzes. Trifling and rather commonplace though they are, they may be regarded as a homage to Johann Strauss, whom Sibelius much admires. Cecil Gray, in his excellent book on the composer, suggests that the many caesurae before the final note which occur in Sibelius's symphonic music have something to do with the typical *Atempausen*, or breaks, of the Viennese waltz. And finally, as an example of the impressionistic style in the piano waltz, we have Debussy's 'La plus que lente' (1910), a piece that in its pale dreamy colours gives no more than a hint at a true waltz.

So much for the piano waltz. A wider and perhaps more attractive field opens with the orchestral or symphonic waltz. Once admitted into the symphonic fold, the waltz had to become worthy of its new status, and hence submit to certain new rules of conduct. It grew in proportions, assumed thematic relations between its different sections, and altogether became a piece of greater consistency and formal unity. Moreover, it was often put to programmatic use as the piano waltz had been by Weber, Schumann and Liszt.

The first to introduce a true waltz into the symphony was Berlioz in the *Symphonie Fantastique* (1830). This was a step as revolutionary, perhaps, as the introduction of the symphonic minuet some ninety years previously



FRANÇOIS CHOPIN  
*Detail from a painting by Eugène Delacroix, 1838*

After the reveries and passions of love portrayed in the first movement, the waltz takes us to a ball where in his dreams the lover sees his beloved in the midst of a festive crowd. In the middle section Berlioz introduces a waltzified version of the *idée fixe*, the musical symbol of his beloved, which runs through the whole symphony. The waltz theme itself, although not very distinguished, gains by its delicate scoring, and the whole character of the movement is typically French, tender, graceful, pretty rather than beautiful, and tinged with a certain sentimental note.

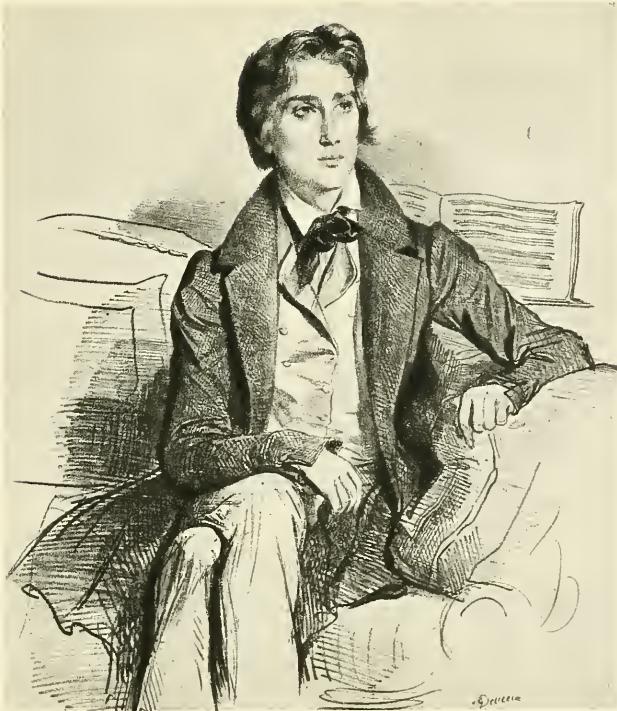
Of the later symphonists it is Tchaikovsky who shows the greatest feeling for the orchestral waltz. Yet it is not the Viennese type with its exuberance and bustling vitality that attracts him, but the suave, gentle and sentimental French variety (Suites nos. 2 and 3, and Valse-Scherzo for violin and orchestra, op. 39) which in his later symphonies he manages to darken with a tragically brooding and dramatic expression.

While in the Third ("Polish") Symphony the *ländler*-like waltz "alla tedesca" is, in the words of a Russian critic, only smuggled into the symphony, in the Fourth Tchaikovsky hits upon the original idea of casting the first movement in the character of a passionate *valse triste* to express a feeling of hopeless despair into which "Fate . . . that tragic power" has thrown the composer. In the third movement of the Fifth Symphony, Tchaikovsky partly replaces the customary scherzo by a waltz, the middle section still retaining a scherzo character. (Part of the waltz-theme proper is, incidentally, derived from an Italian street-song which the composer heard in Florence.) And in the Sixth it is possible to interpret the famous  $\frac{5}{4}$  movement as a kind of waltz in a rhythm deliberately distorted and thrown out of gear, as it were, so as to fit the gloomy, suicidal mood in which the symphony as a whole was conceived.

In this context mention must also be made of the prominent part played by the *ländler*, and, to a lesser degree, the waltz, in the works of the later Austrian symphonists Bruckner and Mahler. While the naïve, peasant-like composer of Upper Austria adhered, like Schubert, to the rustic type in a more or less pure form and introduces his *ländler* as an expression of his closeness to the Austrian soil, Mahler, a highly intellectual type of musician, often resorts, like Tchaikovsky, to the use of deliberately distorted and parodied dance tunes which symbolise his idea of life's trivial things. This treatment, by the way, already foreshadows the parodies and grotesque skits to which, as we shall see, more modern composers have subjected both *ländler* and waltz.

In addition to waltzes found in symphonies there are many independent orchestral waltzes written by romantic composers. These, following the predominant tendency of nineteenth-century instrumental music, were mostly conceived in the form of symphonic tone-poems. The most outstanding example of the older type are Liszt's 'Mephisto' Waltzes nos. 1 and 2. Liszt was one of the many romantics to be greatly attracted by the figure of Mephisto, so much so that he wrote no less than four Mephisto waltzes and a Mephisto polka.

As there is still widespread confusion about these different waltzes, here are the facts for the reader's guidance: Mephisto Waltz no. 1 (1860) and no. 2 (1880-81), which are related but by no means identical, were written for orchestra first, and form the second of the *Two Episodes from Lenau's Faust*. They are also known by their main title 'Dance in the Village Inn'. Liszt subsequently transcribed them for piano solo as well as for piano duet. Mephisto Waltz no. 3 (1883) is an original work for piano solo, and has



FRANZ LISZT

*Lithograph by Achille Devéria, 1832*

only very few features in common with the orchestral waltzes. And finally there is an unfinished waltz no. 4 for piano solo (1885).

For Liszt, the figure of Mephisto was not so much the embodiment of pure evil as of irony and sarcasm, a cynical rogue and jester mocking at human weakness. And this element of irony and derisive laughter gives the orchestral Mephisto Waltzes their peculiar note. Their scope is indicated by the main title 'Dance in the Village Inn', in which Mephisto appears as a fiddler who by his wild music turns the village dance into a mad orgy, while Faust and the peasant girl disappear in "a sea of ecstasy". Liszt's novelty lies in turning the waltz into a piece of demoniac, wild and brilliant orchestral devilry, a thing which at the time seemed incompatible with the traditional waltz. The second of the Mephisto waltzes has a much less lyrical middle section and is, altogether, not on the level of the first. With the third

Mephisto waltz we have already dealt in connection with the concert waltzes for piano.

Of the composers who followed in the wake of Liszt's tone-poem waltzes only Saint-Saëns and Sibelius may be mentioned here. Instead of Liszt's Devil it is Death who in Saint-Saëns's well-known 'Danse Macabre' plays the fiddle and makes the skeletons rise from their graves to join in a spectral dance. Nowadays this piece strikes us as a scissors-and-paste spectre. Sibelius's 'Valse Triste', which occurs in the incidental music to the play *Kuolema (Death)* by Arvid Järnefeldt, is another study in the macabre, suggesting the dream visions of a dying woman who, in her delirium, takes part in a wild dance, until Death suddenly walks in and the vision disappears. There is a good deal of commonplace sentimentality in the 'Valse Triste'. Yet in spite or rather because of it, this piece has achieved a popularity unrivalled by Sibelius's great symphonic works.

In a class by themselves stand the orchestral waltzes of Ravel, the 'Valses Nobles et Sentimentales' (1911) and the magnificent 'La Valse' (1918). Ravel, with his strong penchant for the *pastiche*, here attempts to combine his own technique with the manner of Schubert and Johann Strauss. In the earlier work it is Schubert from whom he took not only the title, but also certain melodic and rhythmic characteristics. The inscription "le plaisir délicieux et toujours nouveau d'une occupation inutile" leads one to expect a work of bright and gay colours, yet the eight numbers and epilogue which make up the 'Valses' are anything but genial music. There is a curiously cold intellectual atmosphere about them, due to acid harmonies, deliberately angular phrasing and the calculated artifice of the orchestration. In these Ravelian *ländlers* and waltzes Schubert would hardly have recognised himself, any more than Johann Strauss would have done in 'La Valse' which Ravel intended as a homage to the Waltz King.

Ravel calls 'La Valse' a choreographic poem illustrating a ball at an Imperial court about 1855. True, Strauss occasionally peeps through in the leaping figures and glissandos of the violins and the swing of the One-two-three; yet even these features often have the typical Ravel sophistication, and create the impression that the bright sunlight of the Viennese waltz has been split up against a sharp prism into a many-coloured spectrum. And there are passages which make one suspect that Ravel intended the music to convey a parody of the exuberance of Viennese light music. However, 'La Valse' is one of Ravel's most successful large-scale orchestral works, and its brilliant orchestration and continuous, consistent flow make it the most outstanding example of the modern symphonic waltz.



RICHARD STRAUSS  
Drawing by József Faragó, 1905

VI

AS IN OPERA, SO IN BALLET

WITH the advent of the romantic age, the waltz found a widening scope in opera just as it did in the symphony and the symphonic tone-poem, viz. Weber's *Der Freischütz*, Marschner's *Hans Heiling*, the operas of Lortzing, Gounod's *Faust* and *Romeo and Juliet*, Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffmann*, Boito's *Mefistofele* and many others. Wagner, in the third act of the *Mastersingers*, makes the apprentices dance a rustic German dance which is marked by heavy drones in the bass and obstinately irregular seven-bar phrases. His enthusiasm for Johann Strauss finds expression in such unexpected places as the second act of *Parsifal* with its graceful and gentle waltz of Klingsor's Flower Maidens.

Yet the composer most addicted to the operatic waltz is Richard Strauss—who, incidentally, is in no way related to the family of the Viennese Straussses. Strauss's taste for this dance is accounted for by his South German (Bavarian) descent. Hence his preference for the robust, coarse-grained rustic waltz. This infatuation, however, has often led him into committing offences against good taste and homogeneity of style. By a generous stretch of the imagination one may accept the waltz of the superman in *Zarathustra*, but it passes one's comprehension why Strauss should have thought of expressing Salome's sexuo-pathological paroxysm, in the opera of the same name, in a Viennese waltz, or, for that matter, why he should introduce into the Chrysanthemis music of *Elektra* a rather mawkish waltz entirely out of place in such a gloomy and morbid atmosphere. But in *Rosenkavalier* (1912) both subject and place of action are perfectly in harmony with the waltz, in spite of the glaring anachronism of characterising the Vienna of Maria Theresa by waltzes *à la* Johann Strauss (or rather Josef Strauss). In *Intermezzo* (1924), where the action takes place in Bavaria, the local colour is effectively suggested by rustic waltzes and ländler, yet *Arabella* (1933), in which opera Strauss attempted to repeat the formula of *Rosenkavalier* with Viennese atmosphere and all, is only a pale reflection, even in the waltzes, of the previous success.

Puccini frequently resorted to waltzes, notably in the ill-fated *La Rondine* (1917), a curious hybrid between the comic opera and the sentimental operetta *à la* Lehár, but for all their orchestral and harmonic refinement these highly-scented *Rondine* waltzes achieve little distinction. Puccini was much more successful with Musetta's famous waltz in the second act of *La Bohème*, which so well reflects the light-hearted and whimsical nature of that character, and in *The Cloak* he takes a leaf out of Stravinsky's *Petroushka*, giving an amusing imitation of a waltz played on a barrel-organ which is badly out of tune (wood-wind in major sevenths instead of octaves).

Other modern operas in which waltzes and ländlers are used, either seriously or as parody, include Alban Berg's *Wozzek* (bitonal ländler), Britten's *Peter Grimes* and Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*.

As in opera, so in ballet the waltz made its first appearance in the later half of the eighteenth century. It seems that the French, with their great tradition of ballet-dancing, here took the initiative. In 1784 Grétry, one of the foremost composers of the *opéra comique*, produced a ballet *Colinette à la cour* which contains an "air pour valser", and Méhul's *La Dansomanie* shows that by 1800 the waltz had firmly established itself in the French ballet. The number of later romantic ballets containing waltzes is legion. Most



'THE SLEEPING BEAUTY', ACT I  
Photograph taken at Covent Garden, 1946

successful in this genre was Léo Delibes (1836-91), who in such works as *Coppélia* and *Sylvia* wrote typical examples of the refined French waltz pieces most distinguished in their melodic charm, pointed harmonies and piquant orchestration. Nor must we forget another master of the ballet, Tchaikovsky, a great admirer of Delibes, who gave us waltzes of great charm and captivating grace in *The Sleeping Beauty* and *The Nutcracker*.

The modern tendency of the ballet toward a pantomimic and expressive nature has rather limited the scope of the waltz. Moreover, with the reaction in the first three decades of our century against romanticism, the waltz was considered outmoded and has often been caricatured and made the subject of musical parody. This occurs in the waltzes of Ravel, and with other composers it is much more pronounced. Chief among them is Stravinsky, who, in *Petrushka* for instance, combines such heterogeneous elements as the opening of Lanner's 'Die Schönbrunner' with a Russian folk-tune, and

heightens this incongruous effect by casting each in a different key. And in his *History of the Soldier*, a narrative with action and dance, he introduces, in keeping with the character of the whole work, a wooden, angular and discordant waltz that is a cruel caricature of Johann Strauss.

Similarly, a brilliant skit on the waltz and ländler is found in William Walton's *Façade*. The ländler of the "Swiss Yodelling Song" is a burlesque of German beer-garden sentimentality, with a sly reference to the Ranz des Vaches from Rossini's *William Tell* Overture, and with broad comic hints at the characteristic instrumental colour of alpine music (cowbells, alphorn and zither). In the 'Valse', Walton brings off a clever *pastiche* of three different styles, Tchaikovsky, Johann Strauss and jazz, the latter element, by its orchestration and use of syncopation, adding an amusing note of grotesque banality.

And so we come to the end of this short account. It is a sobering thought that a dance such as the waltz which can look back on such a glorious past is now condemned to a mere shadow existence. Go to any dance-hall and you will find that out of any dozen dances not more than one will be a waltz. And that is probably a generous estimate. A professor at Harvard, when invited to dance a waltz, retorted: "Why should I progress so purposelessly? Not even animals move in a circle unless you extirpate the frontal lobe of their brain. Then they will turn in a circle." One wonders what this academic luminary would have to say about the frenzied convulsions and limb contortions that grace the jive, jitterbug and boogie-woogie!

There is no getting away from the fact that the waltz, the carefree dance of an age long past, an age that knew *la douceur de vivre* but nothing of aeroplanes, radio and atom bomb, has run its course. We are living in an era of technical invention; the machine has taken hold of our lives, and this is reflected in our modern dances. The new spirit manifests itself in marked rigidity of rhythm, mechanical accentuation of the accompaniment, constant syncopation and a pungent, often eccentric orchestration; it is a spirit worlds apart from that which made the waltz. True, the waltz, like every dance, is not free from a mechanical and stereotyped rhythm; yet the  $\frac{3}{4}$  time of the waltz, with only the first beat accentuated, lends itself infinitely better to the invention of melodies of great sweep, unhampered flow and graceful, lyrical expression than the halting, incisive and percussive One-two or One-two-Three-four common to all dances of Negro-American origin.

*As in Opera, so in Ballet*

We tend nowadays to look patronisingly and even with a certain ironic contempt (Ravel, Stravinsky, Walton) upon the old-fashioned waltz, but from a purely musical point of view it cannot be denied that it proved itself much more creative than any of the modern dances. Cake-walk, ragtime, tango, foxtrot, Charleston, blues—they have all found entry into serious instrumental music. Yet where do they offer examples to compare with such gems as the piano waltzes of Schubert, Chopin and Brahms or the orchestral waltzes of Berlioz, Liszt, Tchaikovsky and Ravel? Nor does any of the Negro-American dances show that century-long organic growth from Lilliputian miniatures of eight and sixteen bars to the almost Brobdingnagian dimensions of the symphonic waltz.

Where among modern dance composers can we find the musician who can show the rich inventive power, the imagination, in fact the genius, of men like Schubert, Lanner and the Straussses? It is because those men had the real stuff of music in them that their music is so far superior, and can still charm our ear, even though the waltz is now but a shade haunting the floors of our modern ball-rooms. Of all nineteenth-century dances it is the Viennese waltz alone that has the merit of satisfying the lowbrow and the highbrow, the layman and the musician, the dancer and the listener; and that is the highest possible criterion by which we can judge the quality of light music.

More than any other dance of its time, the waltz can boast of its long and intimate links with the social history of a memorable century. It at once symbolised and reflected something that was part and parcel of European culture, something that seems to have vanished for ever.



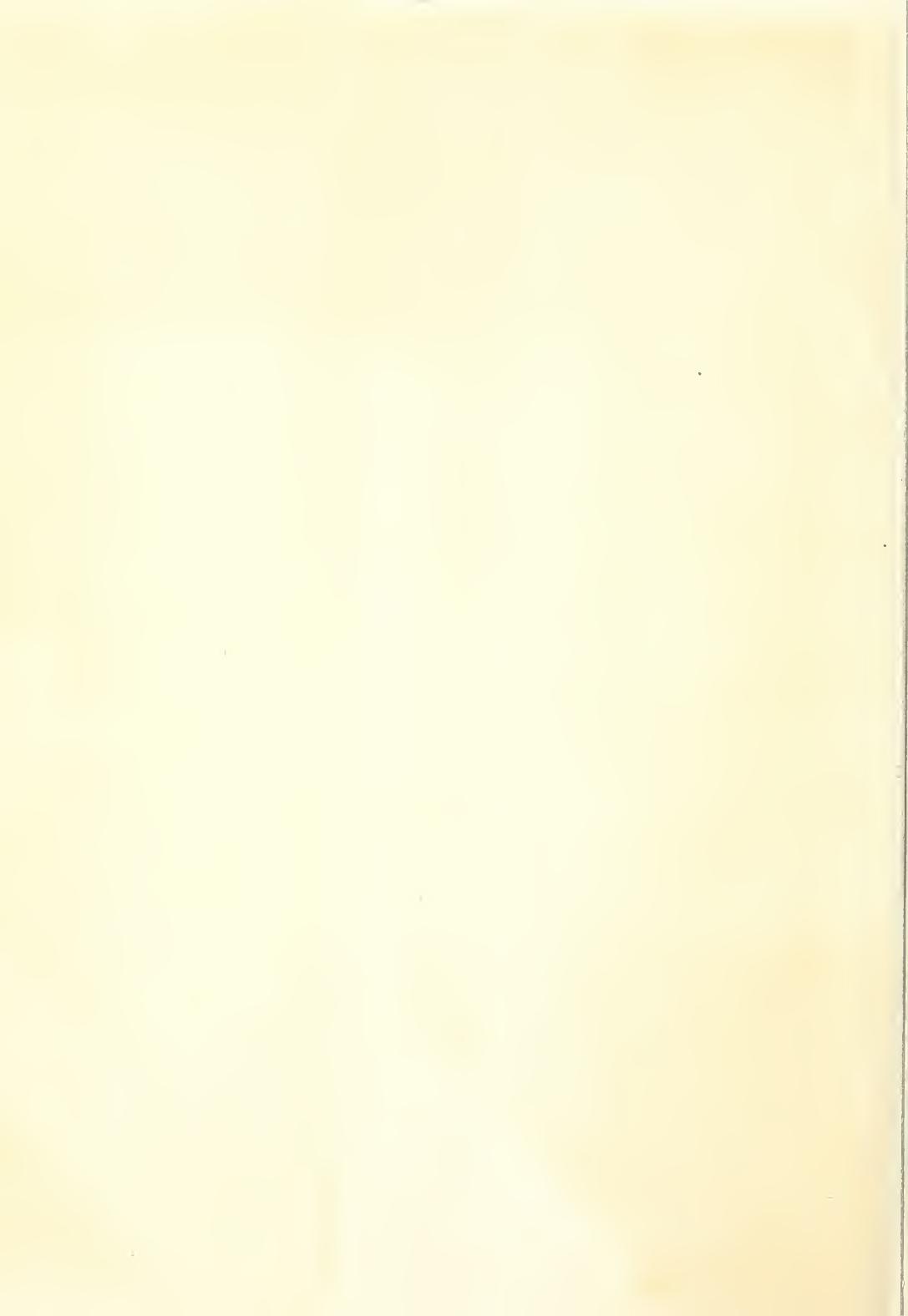
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